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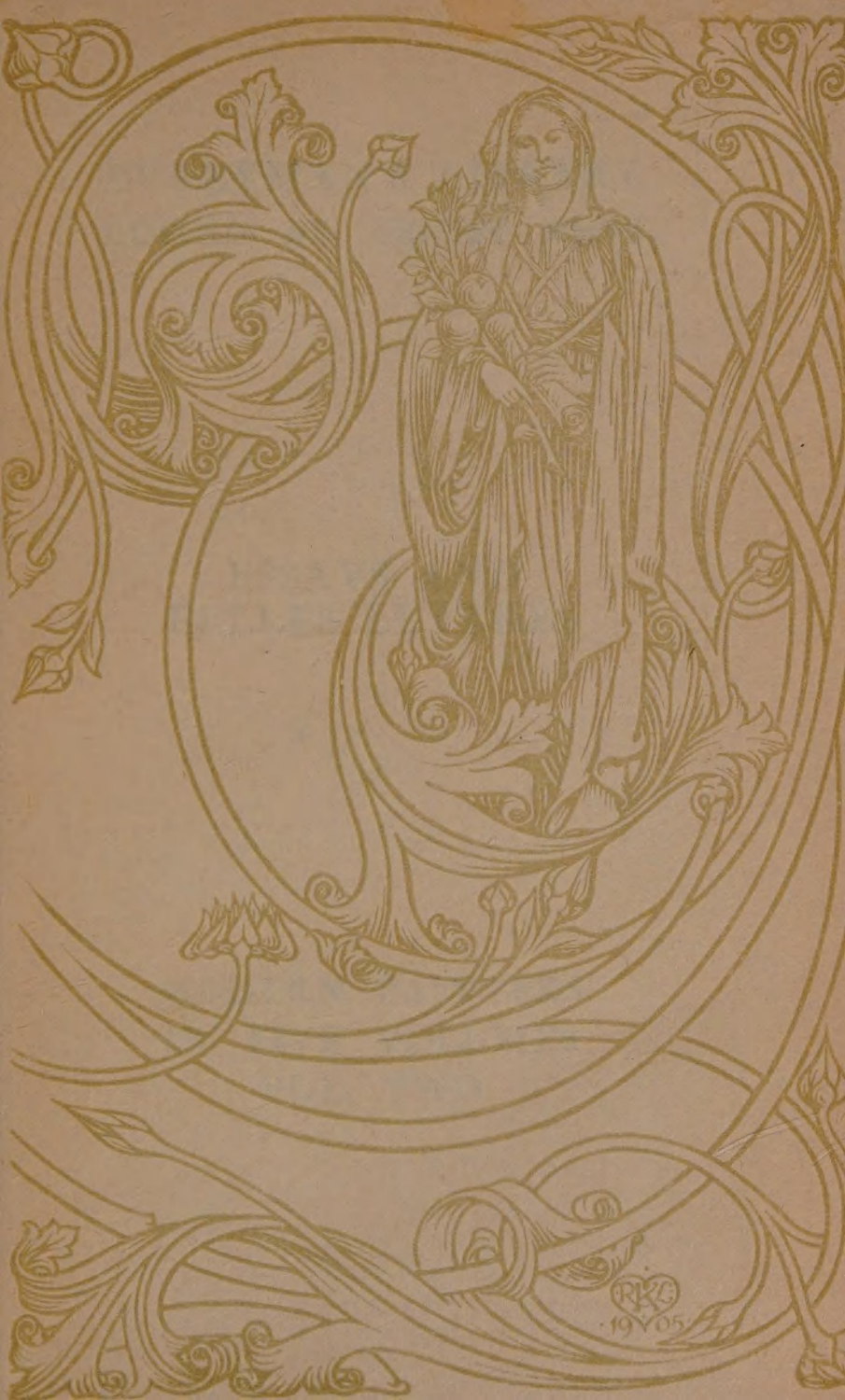
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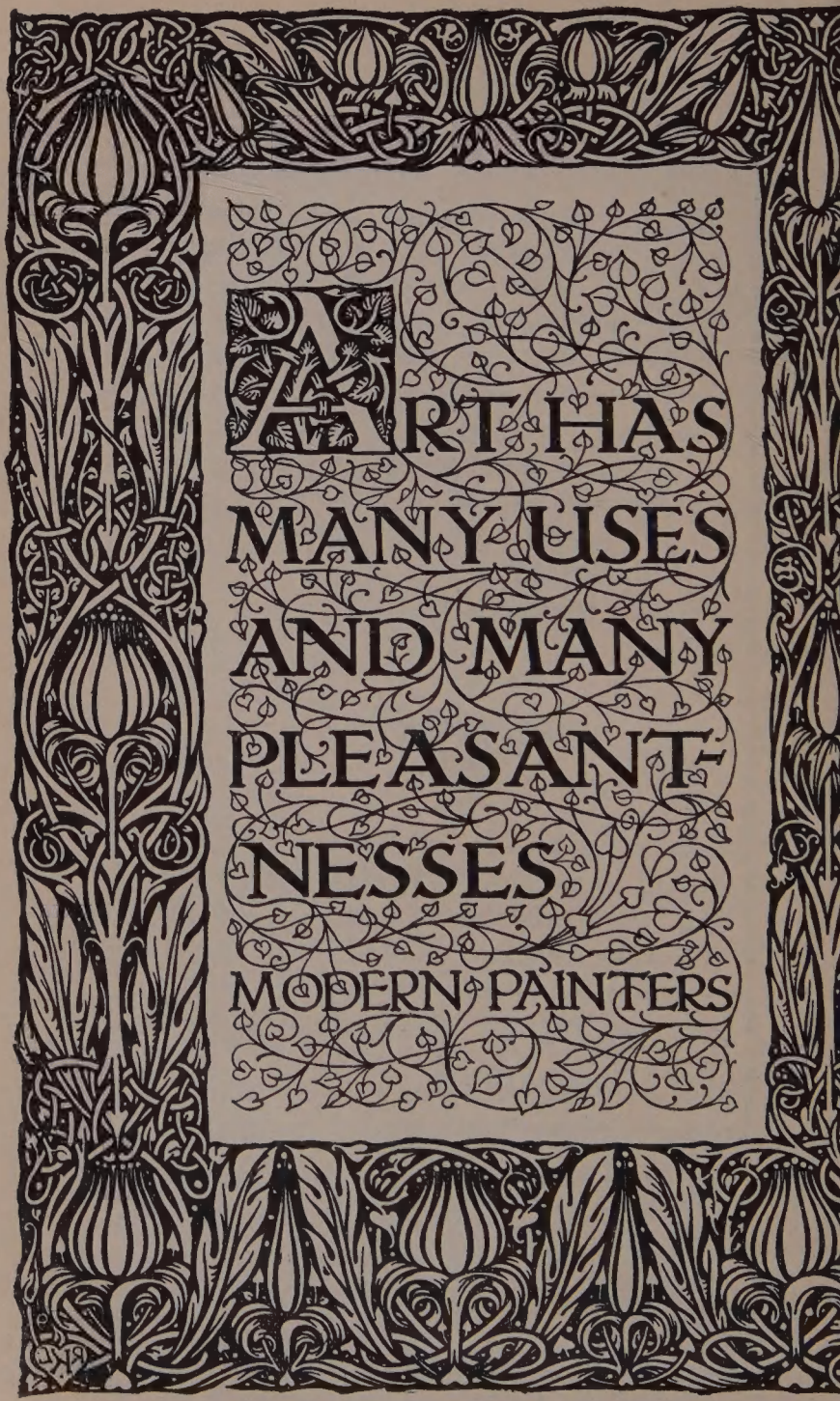
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. . . . "Accuse me not
Of arrogance, ...
If, having walked with nature,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their Divinity
Revolts, offended at the ways of men,
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe
No more than as a mirror that reflects
The proud Self-love her own intelligence."

WORDSWORTH.

MODERN PAINTERS

PART II—(*Continued*)

OF TRUTH

SECTION IV

OF TRUTH OF EARTH

CHAPTER I

OF GENERAL STRUCTURE

By truth of earth, we mean the faithful representation of the facts and forms of the bare ground, considered as entirely divested of vegetation, through whatever disguise, or under whatever modification the clothing of the landscape may occasion. Ground is to the landscape painter what the naked human body is to the historical. The growth of vegetation, the action of water, and even of clouds upon it and around it, are so far subject and subordinate to its forms, as the folds of the dress and the fall of the hair are to the modulation of the animal anatomy. Nor is this anatomy always so concealed, but in all sublime compositions, whether of nature or art, it must be seen in its naked purity. The laws of the organization of the earth are distinct and fixed as those of the animal frame, simpler and broader, but equally authoritative and inviolable. Their results may be arrived at without knowledge of the interior mechanism; but for that very reason ignorance of them is the more disgraceful, and violation of them more unpardonable. They are in the landscape the foundation of all other truths—the most necessary, therefore, even if they were not in themselves attractive; but they are as beautiful as they are essential, and every abandonment of

§ 1. First laws of the organization of the earth, and their importance in art.

them by the artist must end in deformity as it begins in falsehood.

§ 2. The slight attention ordinarily paid to them. Their careful study by modern artists.

That such abandonment is constant and total in the works of the old masters, has escaped detection, only because of persons generally cognizant of art, few have spent time enough in hill countries to perceive the certainty of the laws of hill anatomy; and because few, even of those who possess such opportunities, ever think of the common earth beneath their feet, as anything possessing specific form, or governed by stedfast principles. That such abandonment should have taken place cannot be surprising, after what we have seen of their fidelity to skies. Those artists who, day after day, could so falsely represent what was for ever before their eyes, when it was to be one of the most important and attractive parts of their picture, can scarcely be expected to give with truth what they could see only partially and at intervals, and what was only to be in their picture a blue line in the horizon, or a bright spot under the feet of their figures.

That such should be all the space allotted by the old landscape painters to the most magnificent phenomena of nature; that the only traces of those Apennines, which in Claude's walks along the brow of the Pincian, for ever bounded his horizon with their azure wall, should, in his pictures, be a cold white outline in the extreme of his tame distance; and that Salvator's sojourns among their fastnesses should only have taught him to shelter his banditti with such paltry morsels of crag as an Alpine stream would toss down before it like a foam-globe; though it may indeed excite our surprise, will, perhaps, when we have seen how these slight passages are executed, be rather a subject of congratulation than of regret. It might, indeed, have shortened our labour in the investigation of mountain truth, had not modern artists been so vast, comprehensive, and multitudinous in their mountain drawings, as to compel us, in order to form the slightest estimate of their knowledge, to enter into some examination of every variety of hill scenery. We shall first gain some general notion of the broad organization of large masses, and then take those masses to pieces, until we come down to the crumbling soil of the foreground.

Mountains are, to the rest of the body of the earth, what violent muscular action is to the body of man. The muscles and tendons of its anatomy are, in the mountain, brought out with fierce and convulsive energy, full of expression, passion, and strength; the plains and the lower hills are the repose and the effortless motion of the frame, when its muscles lie dormant and concealed beneath the lines of its beauty, yet ruling those lines in their every undulation. This, then, is the first grand principle of the truth of the earth. The spirit of the hills is action; that of the lowlands, repose; and between these there is to be found every variety of motion and of rest; from the inactive plain, sleeping like the firmament, with cities for stars, to the fiery peaks, which, with heaving bosoms and exulting limbs, with the clouds drifting like hair from their bright foreheads, lift up their Titan hands to Heaven, saying, "I live for ever!"

§ 3. General structure of the earth. The hills are its action, the plains its rest.

But there is this difference between the action of the earth, and that of a living creature, that while the exerted limb marks its bones and tendons through the flesh, the excited earth casts off the flesh altogether, and its bones come out from beneath. Mountains are the bones of the earth, their highest peaks are invariably those parts of its anatomy which in the plains lie buried under five and twenty thousand feet of solid thickness of superincumbent soil, and which spring up in the mountain ranges in vast pyramids or wedges, flinging their garment of earth away from them on each side. The masses of the lower hills are laid over and against their sides, like the masses of lateral masonry against the skeleton arch of an unfinished bridge, except that they slope up to and lean against the central ridge: and finally, upon the slopes of these lower hills are strewed the level beds of sprinkled gravel, sand, and clay, which form the extent of the champaign. Here then is another grand principle of the truth of earth, that the mountains must come from under all, and be the support of all; and that everything else must be laid in their arms, heap above heap, the plains being the uppermost. Opposed to this truth is every appearance of the hills being laid upon the plains, or built

§ 4. Mountains come out from underneath the plains, and are their support.

upon them. Nor is this a truth only of the earth on a large scale, for every minor rock (in position) comes out from the soil about it as an island out of the sea, lifting the earth near it like waves beating on its sides.

§ 5. Structure of the plains themselves. Their perfect level, when deposited by quiet water.

Such being the structure of the framework of the earth, it is next to be remembered that all soil whatsoever wherever it is accumulated in greater quantity than is sufficient to nourish the moss or the wallflower, has been so, either by the direct transporting agency of water, or under the guiding influence and power of water. All plains capable of cultivation are deposits from some kind of water—some from swift and tremendous currents, leaving their soil in sweeping banks and furrowed ridges—others, and this is in mountain districts almost invariably the case, by slow deposit from a quiet lake in the mountain hollow, which has been gradually filled by the soil carried into it by streams, which soil is of course finally left spread at the exact level of the surface of the former lake, as level as the quiet water itself. Hence we constantly meet with plains in hill districts, which fill the hollows of the hills with as perfect and faultless a level as water, and out of which the steep rocks rise at the edge with as little previous disturbance, or indication of their forms beneath, as they do from the margin of a quiet lake. Every delta—and there is one at the head of every lake in every hill-district—supplies an instance of this. The rocks at Altorf plunge beneath the plain, which the lake has left, at as sharp an angle as they do into the lake itself beside the chapel of Tell. The plain of the Arve, at Sallenche, is terminated so sharply by the hills to the south-east, that I have seen a man sleeping with his back supported against the mountain, and his legs stretched on the plain; the slope which supported his back rising 5,000 feet above him, and the couch of his legs stretched for five miles before him. In distant effect these champaigns lie like deep, blue, undisturbed water, while the mighty hills around them burst out from beneath, raging and tossing like a tumultuous sea. The valleys of Meyringen, Interlachen, Altorf, Sallenche, St. Jean de Maurienne; the great plain of Lombardy itself, as seen from Milan or Padua, under the Alps, the Euganeans, and the Apennines; and the Campo Felice under Vesuvius, are a few, out of the

thousand instances, which must occur at once to the mind of every traveller.

§ 6. Illustrated by Turner's Marengo.

Let the reader now open Rogers's Italy, at the seventeenth page, and look at the vignette which heads it of the battle of Marengo. It needs no comment. It cannot but carry with it, after what has been said, the instant conviction that Turner is as much of a geologist as he is of a painter. It is a summary of all we have been saying, and a summary so distinct and clear, that without any such explanation it must have forced upon the mind the impression of such facts—of the plunging of the hills underneath the plain—of the perfect level and repose of this latter laid in their arms, and of the tumultuous action of the emergent summits.

§ 7. General divisions of formation resulting from this arrangement. Plan of investigation.

We find, according to this its internal structure, which, I believe, with the assistance of Turner, can scarcely now be misunderstood, that the earth may be considered as divided into three great classes of formation, which geology has already named for us. Primary—the rocks, which, though in position lower than all others, rise to form the central peaks, or interior nuclei of all mountain ranges. Secondary—the rocks which are laid in beds above these, and which form the greater proportion of all hill scenery. Tertiary—the light beds of sand, gravel, and clay, which are strewed upon the surface of all, forming plains and habitable territory for man. We shall find it convenient, in examining the truth of art, to adopt, with a little modification, the geological arrangement, considering first, the formation and character of the highest or central peaks; then the general structure of the lower mountains, including in this division those composed of the various slates which a geologist would call primary; and, lastly, the minutiæ and most delicate characters of the beds of these hills, when they are so near as to become foreground objects, and the structure of the common soil which usually forms the greater space of an artist's foreground. Hence our task will arrange itself into three divisions—the investigation of the central mountains, of the inferior mountains, and of the foreground.

CHAPTER II

OF THE CENTRAL MOUNTAINS

§ 1. Similar character of the central peaks in all parts of the world.

It does not always follow, because a mountain is the highest of its group, that it is in reality one of the central range. The Jungfrau is only surpassed in elevation, in the chain of which it is a member, by the Schreckhorn and Finster-Aar-horn; but it is entirely a secondary mountain. But the central peaks are usually the highest, and may be considered as the chief components of all mountain scenery in the snowy regions. Being composed of the same rocks in all countries, their external character is the same everywhere. Its chief essential points are the following.

§ 2. Their arrangements in pyramids or wedges, divided by vertical fissures.

Their summits are almost invariably either pyramids or wedges. Domes may be formed by superincumbent snow, or appear to be formed by the continuous outline of a sharp ridge seen transversely, with its precipice to the spectator; but wherever a rock appears, the uppermost termination of that rock will be a steep edgy ridge, or a sharp point, very rarely presenting even a gentle slope on any of its sides, but usually inaccessible unless encumbered with snow.

These pyramids and wedges split vertically, or nearly so, giving smooth faces of rock, either perpendicular or very steeply inclined, which appear to be laid against the central wedge or peak, like plants upright against a wall. The surfaces of these show close parallelism; their fissures are vertical, and cut them smoothly, like the edges of shaped planks. Often groups of these planks, if I may so call them, rise higher than those between them and the central ridge, forming detached ridges inclining towards the central one. The planks are cut transversely, sometimes by graceful curvilinear fissures; sometimes by straight fissures, which are commonly parallel to the slope of one of the sides of the peak, while the main direction of the planks or leaves is parallel to that of its other side, or points directly to its summit. But the *universal* law of fracture is—

first, that it is clean and sharp, having a perfectly smooth surface, and a perfectly sharp edge to all the fissures; secondly, that every fissure is steeply inclined, and that a horizontal line, or one approaching to it, is an impossibility, except in some turn of a curve.

Hence, however the light may fall, these peaks are seen marked with sharp and defined shadows, indicating the square edges of the planks of which they are made up, which shadows sometimes are vertical, pointing to the summit; but are oftener parallel to one of the sides of the peak, and intersected by a second series, parallel to the other side. Where there has been much disintegration, the peak is often surrounded with groups of lower ridges or peaks, like the leaves of an artichoke or a rose, all evidently part and parcel of the great peak; but falling back from it, as if it were a budding flower, expanding its leaves one by one.

§ 3. Causing groups of rock resembling an artichoke or rose.

Now, if I were giving a lecture on geology, and were searching for some means of giving the most faithful idea possible of the external appearance caused by this structure of the primary hills, I should throw my geological outlines aside, and take up Turner's vignette of the Alps at Daybreak. After what has been said, a single glance at it will be enough. Observe the exquisite decision with which the edge of the uppermost plank of the great peak is indicated by its clear dark side and sharp shadow; then the rise of the second low ridge on its side, only to descend again precisely in the same line; the two fissures of this peak, one pointing to its summit, the other rigidly parallel to the great slope which descends towards the sun; then the sharp white *aiguille* on the right, with the great fissure from its summit, rigidly and severely square, as marked below, where another edge of rock is laid upon it. But this is not all; the black rock in the foreground is equally a member of the mass, its chief slope parallel with that of the mountain, and all its fissures and lines inclined in the same direction; and, to complete the mass of evidence more forcibly still, we have the dark mass on the left articulated with absolute right lines, as parallel as if they had been drawn with a ruler, indicating the tops of two of these huge plates or planks, pointing, with the universal

§ 4. The faithful statement of these facts by Turner in his Alps at daybreak.

tendency, to the great ridge, and intersected by fissures parallel to it. Throughout the extent of mountain, not one horizontal line, nor an approach to it, is discernible. This cannot be chance—it cannot be composition—it may not be beautiful—perhaps nature is very wrong to be so parallel, and very disagreeable in being so straight;—but this *is* nature, whether we admire it or not.

§ 5. Vignette of the Andes and others.

In the vignette illustration to Jacqueline, we have another series of peaks, whose structure is less developed, owing to their distance, but equally clear and faithful in all points, as far as it is given. But the vignette of Aosta, in the Italy, is perhaps more striking than any that could be named for its rendering of the perfect parallelism of the lower and smaller peaks with the great lines of the mass they compose; and that of the Andes, the second in Campbell, for its indication of the multitudes of the vertical and plank-like beds arranged almost like the leaves of a flower. This last especially, one of the very noblest, most faithful, most scientific statements of mountain form which even Turner has ever made, can leave little more to be said or doubted.

§ 6. Necessary distance, and consequent aërial effect on all such mountains.

Now, whenever these vast peaks, rising from 12,000 to 24,000 feet above the sea, form part of anything like a landscape, that is to say, whenever the spectator beholds them from the region of vegetation, or even from any distance at which it is possible to get something like a view of their whole mass, they must be at so great a distance from him as to become aërial and faint in all their details. Their summits, and all those higher masses of whose character we have been speaking, can by no possibility be nearer to him than twelve or fifteen miles; to approach them nearer he must climb—must leave the region of vegetation, and must confine his view to a part, and that a very limited one, of the mountain he is ascending. Whenever, therefore, these mountains are seen over anything like vegetation, or are seen in mass, they *must* be in the far distance. Most artists would treat an horizon fifteen miles off very much as if it were mere air; and though the greater clearness of the upper air permits the high summits to be seen with extraordinary distinctness, yet they never can by any possibility have dark or deep shadows, or intense

dark relief against a light. Clear they may be, but faint they must be, and their great and prevailing characteristic, as distinguished from other mountains, is want of apparent solidity. They rise in the morning light rather like sharp shades, cast up into the sky, than solid earth. Their lights are pure, roseate, and cloud-like—their shadows transparent, pale, and opalescent, and often indistinguishable from the air around them, so that the mountain-top is seen in the heaven only by its flakes of motionless fire.

§ 7. Total want of any rendering of their phenomena in ancient art.

Now, let me once more ask, though I am sufficiently tired of asking, what record have we of anything like this in the works of the old masters? There is no vestige in any existing picture of the slightest effort to represent the high hill ranges; and as for such drawing of their forms as we have found in Turner, we might as well look for them among the Chinese. Very possibly it may be all quite right,—very probably these men showed the most cultivated taste, the most unerring judgment, in filling their pictures with mole-hills and sand-heaps. Very probably the withered and poisonous banks of Avernus, and the sand and cinders of the Campagna, are much more sublime things than the Alps; but still what limited truth it is, if truth it be, when through the last fifty pages we have been pointing out fact after fact, scene after scene, in clouds and hills (and not individual facts nor scenes, but great and important classes of them,) and still we have nothing to say when we come to the old masters; but, "they are not here." Yet this is what we hear so constantly called painting "general" nature.

§ 8. Character of the representations of Alps in the distances of Claude.

Although, however, there is no vestige among the old masters of any effort to represent the attributes of the higher mountains seen in comparative proximity, we are not altogether left without evidence of their having thought of them as sources of light in the extreme distance, as for example, in that of the reputed Claude in our National Gallery, called the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca. I have not the slightest doubt of its being a most execrable copy; for there is not one touch nor line of even decent painting in the whole picture; but as connoisseurs have considered it a Claude, as it has been put in our Gallery for a Claude, and

as people admire it every day for a Claude, I may at least presume it has those qualities of Claude in it which are wont to excite the public admiration, though it possesses none of those which sometimes give him claim to it; and I have so reasoned, and shall continue to reason upon it, especially with respect to facts of form, which cannot have been much altered by the copyist. In the distance of that picture (as well as in that of the Sinon before Priam, which I have little doubt is at least partially original, and whose central group of trees is a very noble piece of painting) is something white, which I believe must be intended for a snowy mountain, because I do not see that it can well be intended for anything else. Now no mountain of elevation sufficient to be so sheeted with perpetual snow, can by any possibility sink so low on the horizon as this something of Claude's, unless it be at a distance of from fifty to seventy miles. At such distances, though the outline is invariably sharp and edgy to an excess, yet all the circumstances of aërial perspective, faintness of shadow, and isolation of light, which I have described as characteristic of the Alps fifteen miles off, take place, of course, in a threefold degree; the mountains rise from the horizon like transparent films, only distinguishable from mist by their excessively keen edges, and their brilliant flashes of sudden light; they are as unsubstantial as the air itself, and impress their enormous size by means of this aërialness, in a far greater degree at these vast distances, than even when towering above the spectator's head. Now, I ask of the candid observer, if there be the smallest vestige of an effort to attain—if there be the most miserable, the most contemptible shadow of attainment of such an effect by Claude? Does that white thing on the horizon look seventy miles off? Is it faint, or fading, or to be looked for by the eye before it can be found out? Does it look high? does it look large? does it look impressive? You cannot but feel that there is not a vestige of any kind or species of truth in that horizon; and that, however artistical it may be, as giving brilliancy to the distance (though, as far as I have any feeling in the matter, it only gives coldness), it is, in the very branch of art on which Claude's reputation chiefly rests, aërial perspective, hurling defiance to nature in her very teeth.

§ 9. Their total want of magnitude and aërial distance.

But there are worse failures yet in this unlucky distance. Aërial perspective is not a matter of paramount importance, because nature infringes its laws herself, and boldly too, though never in a case like this before us; but there are some laws which nature never violates—her laws of form. No mountain was ever raised to the level of perpetual snow, without an infinite multiplicity of form. Its foundation is built of a hundred minor mountains, and, from these, great buttresses run in converging ridges to the central peak. There is no exception to this rule; no mountain 15,000 feet high is ever raised without such preparation and variety of outwork. Consequently, in distant effect, when chains of such peaks are visible at once, the multiplicity of form is absolutely oceanic; and though it is possible in near scenes to find vast and simple masses composed of lines which run unbroken for a thousand feet, or more, it is physically impossible when these masses are thrown seventy miles back, to have simple outlines, for then these large features become mere jags and hillocks, and are heaped and huddled together with endless confusion. To get a simple form, seventy miles away, mountain lines would be required unbroken for leagues; and this, I repeat, is physically impossible. Hence these mountains of Claude, having no indication of the steep vertical summits which we have shown to be the characteristic of the central ridges having soft edges instead of decisive ones, simple forms (one line to the plain on each side) instead of varied and broken ones, and being painted with a crude raw white, having no transparency, nor filminess, nor air in it, instead of rising in the opalescent mystery which invariably characterizes the distant snows, have the forms and the colours of heaps of chalk in a lime-kiln, not of Alps. They are destitute of energy, of height, of distance, of splendour, and of variety, and are the work of a man, whether Claude or not, who had neither feeling for nature, nor knowledge of art.

§ 10. And violation of specific form.

I should not, however, insist upon the faults of this picture, believing it to be a copy, if I had ever seen, even in his most genuine works, an extreme distance of Claude with any of the essential characters of nature. But although in his better pictures we have always beautiful drawing of the *air*,

§ 11. Even in his best works.

which in the copy before us is entirely wanting, the real features of the extreme mountain distance are equally neglected or maligned in all. There is, indeed, air between us and it; but ten miles, not seventy miles of space. Let us observe a little more closely the practice of nature in such cases.

§ 12. Farther illustration of the distant character of mountain chains.

The multiplicity of form which I have shown to be necessary in the outline, is not less felt in the body of the mass. For, in all extensive hill ranges, there are five or six lateral chains separated by deep valleys, which rise between the spectator and the central ridge, showing their tops one over another, wave beyond wave, until the eye is carried back to the faintest and highest forms of the principal chain. These successive ridges, and I speak now not merely of the Alps, but of mountains generally, even as low as 3,000 feet above the sea, show themselves in extreme distance merely as vertical shades, with very sharp outlines, detached from one another by greater intensity, according to their nearness. It is with the utmost difficulty that the eye can discern any solidity or roundness in them; the lights and shades of solid form are both equally lost in the blue of the atmosphere, and the mountain tells only as a flat, sharp-edged film, of which multitudes intersect and overtop one another, separated by the greater faintness of the retiring masses. This is the most simple and easily imitated arrangement possible, and yet, both in nature and art, it expresses distance and size in a way otherwise quite unattainable. For thus, the whole mass of one mountain being of one shade only, the smallest possible difference in shade will serve completely to detach it from another, and thus ten or twelve distances may be made evident, when the darkest and nearest is an aërial grey as faint as the sky; and the beauty of such arrangements carried out as nature carries them, to their highest degree, is, perhaps, the most striking feature connected with hill scenery: you will never, by any chance, perceive in extreme distance,

§ 13. Their excessive appearance of transparency.

anything like solid form or projection of the hills. Each is a dead, flat, perpendicular film or shade, with a sharp edge darkest at the summit, and lost as it descends, and about equally dark whether turned towards the light or from it;

and of these successive films of mountain you will probably have half a dozen, one behind another, all showing with perfect clearness their every chasm and peak in the outline, and not one of them showing the slightest vestige of solidity, but on the contrary, looking so thoroughly transparent, that if it so happens, as I have seen frequently, that a conical near hill meets with its summit the separation of two distant ones, so that the right-hand slope of the nearer hill forms an apparent continuation of the right-hand slope of the left-hand farther hill, and *vice versa*, it is impossible to get rid of the impression that one of the more distant peaks is seen *through* the other.

§ 14. Illustrated from the works of Turner and Stanfield. The Borromean Islands of the latter.

I may point out in illustration of these facts, the engravings of two drawings of precisely the same chain of distant hills, —Stanfield's Borromean Islands, with the St. Gothard in the distance, and Turner's Arona, also with the St. Gothard in the distance. Far be it from me to indicate the former of these plates as in any way exemplifying the power of Stanfield, or affecting his reputation; it is an unlucky drawing, murdered by the engraver, and as far from being characteristic of Stanfield as it is from being like nature, but it is just what I want, to illustrate the particular error of which I speak; and I prefer showing this error where it accidentally exists in the works of a really great artist, standing there alone, to pointing it out where it is confused with other faults and falsehoods in the works of inferior hands. The former of these plates is an example of everything which a hill distance is not, and the latter of everything which it is. In the former, we have the mountains covered with patchy lights, which being of equal intensity whether near or distant, confuse all the distances together; while the eye, perceiving that the light falls so as to give details of solid form, yet finding nothing but insipid and formless spaces displayed by it, is compelled to suppose that the whole body of the hills is equally monotonous and devoid of character; and the effect upon it is not one whit more impressive and agreeable than might be received from a group of sand-heaps, washed into uniformity by recent rain.

Compare with this the distance of Turner in Arona. It is totally impossible here to say which way the light falls

on the distant hills, except by the slightly increased decision of their edges turned towards it, but the greatest attention is paid to get these edges decisive, yet full of gradation, and perfectly true in character of form. All the rest of the mountain is then indistinguishable haze, and by the bringing of these edges more and more decisively over one another, Turner has given us between the right-hand side of the picture and the snow, fifteen distinct distances, yet every one of these distances in itself palpitating, changeful, and suggesting subdivision into countless multitude. Something of this is traceable even in the engraving, and all the essential characters are perfectly well marked. I think even the least experienced eye can scarcely but feel the truth of this distance as compared with Stanfield's. In the latter, the eye gets something of the form, and therefore wonders it sees no more; the impression on it, therefore, is of hills within distinctly visible distance, indiscernible through want of light or dim atmosphere, and the effect is, of course, smallness of space, with obscurity of light and thickness of air. In Turner's, the eye gets nothing of the substance, and wonders it sees so much of the outline; the impression is, therefore, of mountains too far off to be ever distinctly seen, rendered clear by brilliancy of light and purity of atmosphere; and the effect, consequently, vastness of space, with intensity of light and crystalline transparency of air.

§ 15. Turner's Arona.

These truths are invariably given in every one of Turner's distances, that is to say, we have always in them two principal facts forced on our notice; transparency, or filminess of mass, and excessive sharpness of edge. And I wish particularly to insist upon this sharpness of edge, because it is not a casual or changeful habit of nature; it is the unfailing characteristic of all very great distances. It is quite a mistake to suppose that slurred or melting lines are characteristic of distant *large* objects; they may be so, as before observed, Sec. II. Chap. IV. § 4, when the focus of the eye is not adapted to them; but, when the eye is really directed to the distance, melting lines are characteristic only of thick mist and vapour between us and the object, not of the removal of the object.

§ 16. Extreme distance of large objects always characterized by very sharp outline.

If a thing has character upon its outline, as a tree for instance, or a mossy stone, the farther it is removed from us, the sharper the outline of the whole mass will become, though in doing so, the particular details which make up the character will become confused in the manner described in the same chapter. A tree fifty yards from us, taken as a mass, has a soft outline, because the leaves and interstices have some effect on the eye. But put it ten miles off against the sky, and its outline will be so sharp that you cannot tell it from a rock. There are three trees on the Mont Saleve, about five miles from Geneva, which from the city, as they stand on the ridge of the hill, are seen defined against the sky. The keenest eye in the world could not tell them from stones. So in a mountain five or six miles off, bushes, and heather, and roughnesses of knotty ground and rock, have still some effect on the eye, and by becoming confused and mingled as before described, soften the outline. But let the mountain be thirty miles off, and its edge will be as sharp as a knife. Let it, as in the case of the Alps, be seventy or eighty miles off, and though it has become so faint that the morning mist is not so transparent, its outline will be beyond all imitation for excessive sharpness. Thus, then, the character of extreme distance is always excessive keenness of edge. If you soften your outline, you either put mist between you and the object, and in doing so diminish your distance, for it is impossible you should see so far through mist as through clear air; or, if you keep an impression of clear air, you bring the object close to the observer, diminish its size in proportion, and if the aërial colours, excessive blues, etc., be retained, represent an impossibility.

§ 17. Want of this decision in Claude.

Take Claude's distance (in No. 244, Dulwich Gallery,[1]) on the right of the picture. It is as pure blue as ever came from the pallet, laid on thick; you cannot see through it, there is not the slightest vestige of transparency or filminess about it, and its edge is soft and blunt. Hence, if it be meant for near hills, the blue is impossible, and the want of details impossible, in the clear atmosphere indicated through the whole picture. If it be meant for extreme distance, the blunt edge is impossible, and the opacity is impossible. I do not

[1] One of the most genuine Claudes I know.

know a single distance of the Italian school to which the same observation is not entirely applicable, except, perhaps, one or two of Nicholas Poussin's. They always involve, under any supposition whatsoever, at least two impossibilities.

§ 18. The perpetual rendering of it by Turner.

I need scarcely mention in particular any more of the works of Turner, because there is not one of his mountain distances in which these facts are not fully exemplified. Look at the last vignette—the Farewell, in Rogers's Italy; observe the excessive sharpness of all the edges, almost amounting to lines, in the distance, while there is scarcely one decisive edge in the foreground. Look at the hills of the distance in the Dunstaffnage, Glencoe, and Loch Achray (illustrations to Scott), in the latter of which the left-hand side of the Benvenue is actually marked with a dark line. In fact, Turner's usual mode of executing these passages is perfectly evident in all his drawings; it is not often that we meet with a very broad dash of wet colour in his finished works, but in these distances, as we before saw of his shadows, all the effect has been evidently given by a dash of very moist pale colour, probably turning the paper upside down, so that a very firm edge may be left at the top of the mountain as the colour dries. And in the Battle of Marengo we find the principle carried so far as to give nothing more than actual outline for the representation of the extreme distance, while all the other hills in the picture are distinctly darkest at the edge. This plate, though coarsely executed, is yet one of the noblest illustrations of mountain character and magnitude existing.

§ 19. Effects of snow, how imperfectly studied.

Such, then, are the chief characteristics of the highest peaks and extreme distances of all hills, as far as the forms of the rocks themselves, and the aërial appearances especially belonging to them, are alone concerned. There is, however, yet another point to be considered—the modification of their form caused by incumbent snow.

Pictures of winter scenery are nearly as common as moonlights, and are usually executed by the same order of artists, that is to say, the most incapable; it being remarkably easy to represent the moon as a white wafer on a black ground, or to scratch out white branches on a cloudy sky. Nevertheless, among Flemish paintings several valuable representations of winter are to be found, and some clever

pieces of effect among the moderns, as Hunt's, for instance, and De Wint's. But all such efforts end in effect alone, nor have I ever in any single instance seen a snow *wreath*, I do not say thoroughly, but even decently, drawn.

In the range of inorganic nature, I doubt if any object can be found more perfectly beautiful than a fresh, deep snow-drift, seen under warm light.[1] Its curves are of inconceivable perfection and changefulness, its surface and transparency alike exquisite, its light and shade of inexhaustible variety and inimitable finish, the shadows sharp, pale, and of heavenly colour, the reflected lights intense and multitudinous, and mingled with the sweet occurrences of transmitted light. No mortal hand can approach the majesty or loveliness of it, yet it is possible by care and skill at least to suggest the preciousness of its forms and intimate the nature of its light and shade; but this has never been attempted; it could not be done except by artists of a rank exceedingly high, and there is something about the feeling of snow in ordinary scenery which such men do not like. But when the same qualities are exhibited on a magnificent Alpine scale and in a position where they interfere with no feeling of life, I see not why they should be neglected, as they have hitherto been, unless that the difficulty of reconciling the brilliancy of snow with a picturesque light and shade, is so great that most good artists disguise or avoid the greater part of upper Alpine scenery, and hint at the glacier so slightly, that they do not feel the necessity of careful study of its forms. Habits of exaggeration increase the evil: I have seen a sketch from nature, by one of the most able of our landscape painters, in which a cloud had been mistaken for a snowy summit, and the hint thus taken exaggerated, as was likely, into an enormous mass of impossible height and unintelligent form, when the mountain itself, for which the cloud had been mistaken, though subtending an angle of about eighteen or twenty degrees, instead of the fifty attributed to it, was of a form so exquisite that it might have been a profitable lesson truly studied to Phidias. Nothing but failure can result from such methods of sketching, nor have I ever seen a single instance of an earnest study of snowy mountains by any one. Hence, wherever they are introduced, their drawing is utterly

[1] Compare Part III. Section I. Chap. 9, § 5.

unintelligent, the forms being those of white rocks, or of rocks lightly powdered with snow, showing sufficiently that not only the painters have never studied the mountain carefully from below, but that they have never climbed into the snowy region. Harding's rendering of the high Alps (*vide* the engraving of Chamonix, and of the Wengern Alp, in the illustrations to Byron) is best; but even he shows no perception of the real anatomy. Stanfield paints only white rocks instead of snow. Turner invariably avoids the difficulty, though he has shown himself capable of grappling with it in the ice of the Liber Studiorum (Mer de Glace,) which is very cold and slippery and very like ice; but of the crusts and wreaths of the higher snow he has taken no cognizance. Even the vignettes to Rogers's Poems fail in this respect. It would be vain to attempt in this place to give any detailed account of the phenomena of the upper snows; but it may be well to note those general principles which every artist ought to keep in mind when he has to paint an Alp.

§ 20. General principles of its forms on the Alps.

Snow is modified by the under forms of the hill in some sort as dress is by the anatomy of the human frame. And as no dress can be well laid on without conceiving the body beneath, so no Alp can be drawn unless its under form is conceived first, and its snow laid on afterwards.

Every high Alp has as much snow upon it as it can hold or carry: It is not, observe, a mere coating of snow of given depth throughout, but it is snow loaded on until the rocks can hold no more. The surplus does not fall in the winter, because, fastened by continual frost, the quantity of snow which an Alp can carry is greater than each single winter can bestow; it falls in the first mild days of spring in enormous avalanches. Afterwards the melting continues, gradually removing from all the steep rocks the small quantity of snow which was all they could hold, and leaving them black and bare among the accumulated fields of unknown depth, which occupy the capacious valleys and less inclined superficies of the mountain.

Hence it follows that the deepest snow does not take nor indicate the actual forms of the rocks on which it lies, but it hangs from peak to peak in unbroken and sweeping festoons, or covers whole groups of peaks, which afford it sufficient hold,

with vast and unbroken domes: these festoons and domes being guided in their curves, and modified in size, by the violence and prevalent direction of the winter winds.

We have, therefore, every variety of indication of the under mountain form, first the mere coating which is soon to be withdrawn, and which shows as a mere sprinkling or powdering after a storm on the higher peaks; then the shallow incrustation on the steep sides glazed by the running down of its frequent meltings, frozen again in the night; then the deeper snow more or less cramped or modified by sudden eminences of emergent rock, or hanging in fractured festoons and huge blue irregular cliffs on the mountain flanks, and over the edges and summits of their precipices in nodding drifts, far overhanging, like a cornice (perilous things to approach the edge of from above); finally the pure accumulation of overwhelming depth, smooth, sweeping, and almost cleftless, and modified only by its lines of drifting. Countless phenomena of exquisite beauty belong to each of these conditions, not to speak of the transition of the snow into ice at lower levels; but all on which I shall at present insist is that the artist should not think of his Alp merely as a white mountain, but conceive it as a group of peaks loaded with an accumulation of snow, and that especially he should avail himself of the exquisite curvatures, never failing, by which the snow unites and opposes the harsh and broken lines of the rock. I shall enter into farther detail on this subject hereafter; at present it is useless to do so, as I have no examples to refer to, either in ancient or modern art. No statement of these facts has hitherto been made, nor any evidence given even of their observation, except by the most inferior painters.[1]

§ 21. Average paintings of Switzerland. Its real spirit has scarcely yet been caught.

Various works in green and white appear from time to time on the walls of the Academy, *like* the Alps indeed, but so frightfully like, that we shudder and sicken at the sight of them, as we do when our best friend shows us into his dining-room, to see a portrait of himself, which "everybody thinks very like." We should be glad to see fewer of these, for Switzerland is quite beyond

[1] I hear of some study of Alpine scenery among the professors at Geneva; but all foreign landscape that I have ever met with has been so utterly ignorant, that I hope for nothing except from our own painters.

the power of any but first-rate men, and is exceedingly bad practice for a rising artist; but, let us express a hope that Alpine scenery will not continue to be neglected as it has been, by those who alone are capable of treating it. We love Italy, but we have had rather a surfeit of it lately;—too many peaked caps and flat-headed pines. We should be very grateful to Harding and Stanfield if they would refresh us a little among the snow, and give us, what we believe them to be capable of giving us, a faithful expression of Alpine ideal. We are well aware of the pain inflicted on an artist's mind by the preponderance of black, and white, and green, over more available colours; but there is nevertheless in generic Alpine scenery, a fountain of feeling yet unopened—a chord of harmony yet untouched by art. It will be struck by the first man who can separate what is national, in Switzerland, from what is ideal. We do not want chalets and three-legged stools, cow-bells and buttermilk. We want the pure and holy hills, treated as a link between heaven and earth.

CHAPTER III

OF THE INFERIOR MOUNTAINS

WE have next to investigate the character of those intermediate masses which constitute the greater part of all hill scenery, forming the outworks of the high ranges, and being almost the sole constituents of such lower groups as those of Cumberland, Scotland, or South Italy.

§ 1. The inferior mountains are distinguished from the central, by being divided into beds.

All mountains whatsoever, not composed of the granite or gneiss rocks described in the preceding chapter, nor volcanic, (these latter being comparatively rare,) are composed of *beds*, not of homogeneous, heaped materials, but of accumulated layers, whether of rock or soil. It may be slate, sandstone, limestone, gravel, or clay; but whatever the substance, it is laid in layers, not in a mass. These layers are scarcely ever horizontal, and may slope to any degree, often occurring

vertical, the boldness of the hill outline commonly depending in a great degree on their inclination. In consequence of this division into beds, every mountain will have two great sets of lines more or less prevailing in its contours—one indicative of the surfaces of the beds, where they come out from under each other—and the other indicative of the extremities or edges of the beds, where their continuity has been interrupted. And these two great sets of lines will commonly be at right angles with each other, or nearly so. If the surface of the bed approach a horizontal line, its termination will approach the vertical, and this is the most usual and ordinary way in which a precipice is produced.

§ 2. Farther division of these beds by joints.

Farther, in almost all rocks there is a third division of substance, which gives to their beds a tendency to split transversely in some directions rather than others, giving rise to what geologists call "joints," and throwing the whole rock into blocks more or less rhomboidal; so that the beds are not terminated by torn or ragged edges, but by faces comparatively smooth and even, usually inclined to each other at some definite angle. The whole arrangement may be tolerably represented by the bricks of a wall, whose tiers may be considered as strata, and whose sides and extremities will represent the joints by which those strata are divided, varying, however, their direction in different rocks, and in the same rock under differing circumstances.

§ 3. And by lines of lamination.

Finally, in the slates, grauwackes, and some calcareous beds, in the greater number, indeed, of *mountain* rocks, we find another most conspicuous feature of general structure — the lines of lamination, which divide the whole rock into an infinite number of delicate plates or layers, sometimes parallel to the direction or "strike" of the strata, oftener obliquely crossing it, and sometimes, apparently, altogether independent of it, maintaining a consistent and unvarying slope through a series of beds contorted and undulating in every conceivable direction. These lines of lamination extend their influence to the smallest fragment, causing it (as, for example, common roofing slate) to break smooth in one direction, and with a ragged edge in another, and marking the faces of the beds and joints with distinct and numberless

lines, commonly far more conspicuous in a near view than the larger and more important divisions.

§ 4. Variety and seeming uncertainty under which these laws are manifested.

Now, it cannot be too carefully held in mind, in examining the principles of mountain structure, that nearly all the laws of nature with respect to external form are rather universal tendencies, evidenced by a plurality of instances, than imperative necessities complied with by all. For instance, it may be said to be a universal law with respect to the boughs of all trees that they incline their extremities more to the ground in proportion as they are lower on the trunk, and that the higher their point of insertion is, the more they share in the upward tendency of the trunk itself. But yet there is not a single group of boughs in any one tree which does not show exceptions to the rule, and present boughs lower in insertion, and yet steeper in inclination, than their neighbours. Nor is this defect or deformity, but the result of the constant habit of nature to carry variety into her very principles, and make the symmetry and beauty of her laws the more felt by the grace and accidentalism with which they are carried out. No one familiar with foliage could doubt for an instant of the necessity of giving evidence of this downward tendency in the boughs; but it would be nearly as great an offence against truth to make the law hold good with every individual branch, as not to exhibit its influence on the majority. Now, though the laws of mountain form are more rigid and constant than those of vegetation, they are subject to the same species of exception in carrying out. Though every mountain has these great tendencies in its lines, not one in a thousand of those lines is absolutely consistent with and obedient to this universal tendency. There are lines in every direction, and of almost every kind, but the sum and aggregate of those lines will invariably indicate the *universal* force and influence to which they are all subjected; and of these lines there will, I repeat, be two principal sets or classes, pretty nearly at right angles with each other. When both are inclined, they give rise to peaks or ridges; when one is nearly horizontal and the other vertical, to table-lands and precipices.

This then is the broad organization of all hills, modified afterwards by time and weather, concealed by superincumbent

soil and vegetation, and ramified into minor and more delicate details in a way presently to be considered, but nevertheless universal in its great first influence, and giving to all mountains a particular cast and inclination; like the exertion of voluntary power in a definite direction, an internal spirit, manifesting itself in every crag, and breathing in every slope, flinging and forcing the mighty mass towards the heaven with an expression and an energy like that of life.

§ 5. The perfect expression of them in Turner's Loch Coriskin.

Now, as in the case of the structure of the central peaks described above, so also here, if I had to give a clear idea of this organization of the lower hills, where it is seen in its greatest perfection, with a mere view to geological truth, I should not refer to any geological drawings, but I should take the Loch Coriskin of Turner. It has luckily been admirably engraved, and for all purposes of reasoning or form, is nearly as effective in the print as in the drawing. Looking at any group of the multitudinous lines which make up this mass of mountain, they appear to be running anywhere and everywhere; there are none parallel to each other, none resembling each other for a moment; yet the whole mass is felt at once to be composed with the most rigid parallelism, the surfaces of the beds towards the left, their edges or escarpments towards the right. In the centre, near the top of the ridge, the edge of a bed is beautifully defined, casting its shadow on the surface of the one beneath it; this shadow marking by three jags the chasms caused in the inferior one by three of its parallel joints. Every peak in the distance is evidently subject to the same great influence, and the evidence is completed by the flatness and evenness of the steep surfaces of the beds which rise out of the lake on the extreme right, parallel with those in the centre.

§ 6. Glencoe and other works.

Turn to Glencoe, in the same series (the Illustrations to Scott). We have in the mass of mountain on the left, the most beautiful indication of vertical beds of a finely laminated rock, terminated by even joints towards the precipice; while the whole sweep of the landscape, as far as the most distant peaks, is evidently governed by one great and simple tendency upwards to the left, those most distant peaks themselves lying over one another in the same direction. In the

Daphne hunting with Leucippus, the mountains on the left descend in two precipices to the plain, each of which is formed by a vast escarpment of the beds whose upper surfaces are shown between the two cliffs, sinking with an even slope from the summit of the lowest to the base of the highest, under which they evidently descend, being exposed in this manner for a length of five or six miles. The same structure is shown, though with more complicated development, on the left of the Loch Katrine. But perhaps the finest instance, or at least the most marked of all, will be found in the exquisite Mount Lebanon, with the convent of St. Antonio, engraved in Finden's Bible. There is not one shade nor touch on the rock which is not indicative of the lines of stratification; and every fracture is marked with a straightforward simplicity which makes you feel that the artist has nothing in his heart but a keen love of the pure unmodified truth; there is no effort to disguise the repetition of forms, no apparent aim at artificial arrangement or scientific grouping; the rocks are laid one above another with unhesitating decision; every shade is understood in a moment, felt as a dark side, or a shadow, or a fissure, and you may step from one block or bed to another until you reach the mountain summit. And yet, though there seems no effort to disguise the repetition of forms, see how it *is* disguised, just as nature would have done it, by the perpetual play and changefulness of the very lines which appear so parallel; now bending a little up, or down, or losing themselves, or running into each other, the old story over and over again,—infinity. For here is still the great distinction between Turner's work and that of a common artist. Hundreds could have given the parallelism of blocks, but none but himself could have done so without the actual repetition of a single line or feature.

§ 7. Especially the Mount Lebanon.

Now compare with this the second mountain from the left in the picture of Salvator, No. 220 in the Dulwich Gallery. The whole is first laid in with a very delicate and masterly grey, right in tone, agreeable in colour, quite unobjectionable for a beginning. But how is this made into rock? On the light side Salvator gives us a multitude of touches, all exactly like one another, and therefore, it is to be hoped, quite patterns of perfection in rock-drawing, since they are

§ 8. Compared with the work of Salvator;

too good to be even varied. Every touch is a dash of the brush, as nearly as possible in the shape of a comma, round and bright at the top, convex on its right side, concave on its left, and melting off at the bottom into the grey. These are laid in confusion one above another, some paler, some brighter, some scarcely discernible, but all alike in shape. Now, I am not aware myself of any particular object, either in earth or heaven, which these said touches do at all resemble or pourtray. I do not, however, assert that they may not resemble something—feathers, perhaps; but I do say, and say with perfect confidence, that they may be Chinese for rocks, or Sanscrit for rocks, or symbolical of rocks in some mysterious and undeveloped character; but that they are no more *like* rocks than the brush that made them. The dark sides appear to embrace and overhang the lights; they cast no shadows, are broken by no fissures, and furnish, as food for contemplation, nothing but a series of concave curves.

§ 9. And of Poussin.

Yet if we go on to No. 269, we shall find something a great deal worse. I can believe Gaspar Poussin capable of committing as much sin against nature as most people; but I certainly do not suspect him of having had any hand in this thing, at least after he was ten years old. Nevertheless, it shows what he is supposed capable of by his admirers, and will serve for a broad illustration of all those absurdities which he himself in a less degree, and with feeling and thought to atone for them, perpetually commits. Take the white bit of rock on the opposite side of the river, just above the right arm of the Niobe, and tell me of what the square green daubs of the brush at its base can be conjectured to be typical. Rocks with pale-brown light sides, and rich green dark sides, are a phenomenon perhaps occurring in some of the improved passages of nature among our Cumberland lakes; where I remember once having seen a bed of roses, of peculiar magnificence, tastefully and artistically assisted in effect by the rocks above it being painted pink to match; but I do not think that they are a kind of thing which the clumsiness and false taste of nature can be supposed frequently to produce; even granting that these same sweeps of the brush could, by any exercise of the imagination, be conceived representative of a dark, or any other

side, which is far more than I am inclined to grant; seeing that there is no cast shadow, no appearance of reflected light, of substance, or of character on the edge; nothing, in short, but pure, staring green paint, scratched heavily on a white ground. Nor is there a touch in the picture more expressive. All are the mere dragging of the brush here and there and everywhere, without meaning or intention; winding, twisting, zigzagging, doing anything in fact which may serve to break up the light and destroy its breadth, without bestowing in return one hint or shadow of anything like form. This picture is, indeed, an extraordinary case, but the Salvator above mentioned is a characteristic and exceedingly favourable example of the usual mode of mountain drawing among the old landscape-painters.[1] Their admirers may be challenged to bring forward a single instance of their expressing, or even appearing to have noted, the great laws of structure above explained. Their hills are, without exception, irregular earthy heaps, without energy or direction of any kind, marked with shapeless shadows and meaningless lines; sometimes, indeed, where great sublimity has been aimed at, approximating to the pure and exalted ideal of rocks, which, in the most artistical specimens of China cups and plates, we see suspended from aërial pagodas, or balanced upon peacocks' tails, but never warranting even the wildest theorist in the conjecture that their perpetrators had ever seen a mountain in their lives. Let us, however, look farther into the modifications of character by which nature conceals the regularity of her first plan; for although all mountains are organized as we have seen, their organization is always modified, and often nearly concealed, by changes wrought upon them by external influence.

§ 10. Effects of external influence on mountain form.

We ought, when speaking of their stratification, to have noticed another great law, which must, however, be understood with greater latitude of application than any of the others, as very far from imperative or constant in particular cases, though universal in its influence on the aggregate of all. It is that the lines by which rocks are terminated, are

[1] I have above exhausted all terms of vituperation, and probably disgusted the reader; and yet I have not spoken with enough severity: I know not any terms of blame that are bitter enough to chastise justly the mountain drawing of Salvator in the pictures of the Pitti Palace.

always steeper and more inclined to the vertical as we approach the summit of the mountain. Thousands of cases are to be found in every group, of rocks and lines horizontal at the top of the mountain and vertical at the bottom; but they are still the exceptions, and the average out of a given number of lines in any rock formation whatsoever, will be found increasing in perpendicularity as they rise. Consequently the great skeleton lines of rock outline are always concave; that is to say, all distant ranges of rocky mountain approximate more or less to a series of concave curves, meeting in peaks, like a range of posts with chains hanging between. I do not say that convex forms will not perpetually occur, but that the tendency of the majority will always be to assume the form of sweeping, curved valleys, with angular peaks; not of rounded convex summits, with angular valleys. This structure is admirably exemplified in the second vignette in Rogers's Italy, and in Piacenza.

§ 11. The gentle convexity caused by aqueous erosion.

But although this is the primary form of all hills, and that which will always cut against the sky in every distant range, there are two great influences whose tendency is directly the reverse, and which modify, to a great degree, both the evidences of stratification and this external form. These are aqueous erosion and disintegration. The latter only is to be taken into consideration when we have to do with minor features of crag; but the former is a force in constant action—of the very utmost importance—a force to which one-half of the great outlines of all mountains is entirely owing, and which has much influence upon every one of their details.

Now the tendency of aqueous action over a large elevated surface is *always* to make that surface symmetrically and evenly convex and dome-like, sloping gradually more and more as it descends, until it reaches an inclination of about 40°, at which slope it will descend perfectly straight to the valley; for at that slope the soil washed from above will accumulate upon the hillside, as it cannot lie in steeper beds. This influence, then, is exercised more or less on all mountains, with greater or less effect in proportion as the rock is harder or softer, more or less liable to decomposition, more or less recent in date of elevation, and more or less characteristic in its

original forms; but it universally induces, in the lower parts of mountains, a series of the most exquisitely symmetrical convex curves, terminating, as they descend to the valley, in uniform and uninterrupted slopes; this symmetrical structure being perpetually interrupted by cliffs and projecting masses, which give evidence of the interior parallelism of the mountain anatomy, but which interrupt the convex forms more frequently by rising out of them, than by indentation.

§ 12. And the effect of the action of torrents.

There remains but one fact more to be noticed. All mountains, in some degree, but especially those which are composed of soft or decomposing substance, are delicately and symmetrically furrowed by the descent of streams. The traces of their action commence at the very summits, fine as threads, and multitudinous, like the uppermost branches of a delicate tree. They unite in groups as they descend, concentrating gradually into dark undulating ravines, into which the body of the mountain descends on each side, at first in a convex curve, but at the bottom with the same uniform slope on each side which it assumes in its final descent to the plain, unless the rock be very hard, when the stream will cut itself a vertical chasm at the bottom of the curves, and there will be no even slope.[1] If, on the other hand, the rock be very soft, the slopes will increase rapidly in height and depth from day to day; washed away at the bottom and crumbling at the top, until, by their reaching the summit of the masses of rock which separate the active torrents, the whole mountain is divided into a series of penthouse-like ridges, all guiding to its summit, and becoming steeper and narrower as they ascend; these in their turn being divided by similar, but smaller ravines—caused in the same manner—into the same kind of ridges; and these again by another series, the arrangement being carried finer and farther according to the softness of the rock. The south side of Saddleback, in Cumberland, is a characteristic example; and the Montagne du Tacondy, in Chamonix, a noble instance of one of these ridges or buttresses, with all its sub-divisions, on a colossal scale.

[1] Some terrific cuts and chasms of this kind occur on the north side of the Valais, from Sion to Briey. The torrent from the great Aletsch glacier descends through one of them. Elsewhere chasms may be found as narrow, but few so narrow and deep.

Now we wish to draw especial attention to the broad and bold simplicity of mass, and the excessive complication of details, which influences like these, acting on an enormous scale, must inevitably produce in all mountain groups; because each individual part and promontory, being compelled to assume the same symmetrical curves as its neighbours, and to descend at precisely the same slope to the valley, falls in with their prevailing lines, and becomes a part of a great and harmonious whole, instead of an unconnected and discordant individual. It is true that each of these members has its own touches of specific character, its own projecting crags and peculiar hollows; but by far the greater portion of its lines will be such as unite with, though they do not repeat, those of its neighbours, and carry out the evidence of one great influence and spirit to the limits of the scene. This effort is farther aided by the original unity and connection of the rocks themselves, which though it often may be violently interrupted, is never without evidence of its existence; for the very interruption itself forces the eye to feel that there is something to be interrupted, a sympathy and similarity of lines and fractures, which, however full of variety and change of direction, never lose the appearance of symmetry of one kind or another. But, on the other hand, it is to be remembered that these great sympathizing masses are not one mountain, but a thousand mountains; that they are originally composed of a multitude of separate eminences, hewn and chiselled indeed into associating form, but each retaining still its marked points and features of character,—that each of these individual members has, by the very process which assimilated it to the rest, been divided and subdivided into equally multitudinous groups of minor mountains; finally, that the whole complicated system is interrupted for ever and ever by daring manifestations of the inward mountain will—by the precipice which has submitted to no modulation of the torrent, and the peak which has bowed itself to no terror of the storm. Hence we see that the same imperative laws which require perfect simplicity of mass, require infinite and termless complication of detail,—that there will not be an inch nor a hair's-breadth of the gigantic heap which has not its touch of separate character, its own peculiar

§ 13. The exceeding simplicity of contour caused by these influences.

§ 14. And multiplicity of feature.

curve, stealing out for an instant and then melting into the common line; felt for a moment by the blue mist of the hollow beyond, then lost when it crosses the enlightened slope,—that all this multiplicity will be grouped into larger divisions, each felt by their increasing aërial perspective, and their instants of individual form, these into larger, and these into larger still, until all are merged in the great impression and prevailing energy of the two or three vast dynasties which divide the Kingdom of the scene.

§ 15. Both utterly neglected in ancient art.

There is no vestige nor shadow of approach to such treatment as this in the whole compass of ancient art. Whoever the master, his hills, wherever he has attempted them, have not the slightest trace of association or connection; they are separate, conflicting, confused, petty and paltry heaps of earth; there is no marking of distances or divisions in their body; they may have holes in them, but no valleys,—protuberances and excrescences, but no parts; and in consequence are invariably diminutive and contemptible in their whole appearance and impression.

§ 16. The fidelity of treatment in Turner's Daphne and Leucippus.

But look at the mass of mountain on the right in Turner's Daphne hunting with Leucippus. It is simple, broad, and united as one surge of a swelling sea; it rises in an unbroken line along the valley, and lifts its promontories with an equal slope. But it contains in its body ten thousand hills. There is not a quarter of an inch of its surface without its suggestion of increasing distance and individual form. First, on the right, you have a range of tower-like precipices, the clinging wood climbing along their ledges and cresting their summits, white waterfalls gleaming through its leaves; not, as in Claude's scientific ideals, poured in vast torrents over the top, and carefully keeping all the way down on the most projecting parts of the sides; but stealing down, traced from point to point, through shadow after shadow, by their evanescent foam and flashing light,—here a wreath, and there a ray,—through the deep chasms and hollow ravines, out of which rise the soft rounded slopes of mightier mountain, surge beyond surge, immense and numberless, of delicate and gradual curve, accumulating in the sky until their garment of forest is exchanged for the shadowy fold of slumbrous morning cloud, above which the utmost silver

peak shines islanded and alone. Put what mountain painting you will beside this, of any other artist, and its heights will look like mole-hills in comparison, because it will not have the unity nor the multiplicity which are in nature, and with Turner, the signs of size.

§ 17. And in the Avalanche and Inundation.

Again, in the Avalanche and Inundation, we have for the whole subject nothing but one vast bank of united mountain, and one stretch of uninterrupted valley. Though the bank is broken into promontory beyond promontory, peak above peak, each the abode of a new tempest, the arbiter of a separate desolation, divided from each other by the rushing of the snow, by the motion of the storm, by the thunder of the torrent; the mighty unison of their dark and lofty line, the brotherhood of ages, is preserved unbroken; and the broad valley at their feet, though measured league after league away by a thousand passages of sun and darkness, and marked with fate beyond fate of hamlet and of inhabitant, lies yet but as a straight and narrow channel, a filling furrow before the flood. Whose work will you compare with this? Salvator's grey heaps of earth, seven yards high, covered with bunchy brambles, that we may be under no mistake about the size, thrown at random in a little plain, beside a zigzagging river, just wide enough to admit of the possibility of there being fish in it, and with banks just broad enough to allow the respectable angler or hermit to sit upon them conveniently in the foreground? Is there more of nature in such paltriness, think you, than in the valley and the mountain which bend to each other like the trough of the sea; with the flank of the one swept in one surge into the height of heaven, until the pine forests lie on its immensity like the shadows of narrow clouds, and the hollow of the other laid league by league into the blue of the air, until its white villages flash in the distance only like the fall of a sunbeam.

§ 18. The rarity among secondary hills of steep slopes or high precipices.

But let us examine by what management of the details themselves this wholeness and vastness of effect are given. We have just seen (§ 11) that it is impossible for the slope of a mountain, not actually a precipice of rock, to exceed 35° or 40°, and that by far the greater part of all hill-surface is composed of graceful curves of much less degree than this reaching 40° only as their ultimate and utmost inclination.

It must be farther observed that the interruptions to such curves, by precipices or steps, are always small in proportion to the slopes themselves. Precipices rising vertically more than 100 feet are very rare among the secondary hills of which we are speaking. I am not aware of any cliff in England or Wales where a plumb-line can swing clear for 200 feet; and even although sometimes, with intervals, breaks, and steps, we get perhaps 800 feet of a slope of 60° or 70°, yet not only are these cases very rare, but even these have little influence on the great contours of a mountain 4000 or 5000 feet in elevation, being commonly balanced by intervals of ascent not exceeding 6° or 8°. The result of which is, first, that the peaks and precipices of a mountain appear as little more than jags or steps emerging from its great curves; and, secondly, that the bases of all hills are enormously extensive as compared with their elevation, so that there must be always a horizontal distance between the observer and the summit five or six times exceeding the perpendicular one.

§ 19. And consequent expression of horizontal distance in their ascent.

Now it is evident, that whatever the actual angle of elevation of the mountain may be, every exhibition of this horizontal distance between us and the summit is an addition to its height, and of course to its impressiveness; while every endeavour to exhibit its slope as steep and sudden, is diminution at once of its distance and elevation. In consequence, nature is constantly endeavouring to impress upon us this horizontal distance, which, even in spite of all her means of manifesting it, we are apt to forget or underestimate; and all her noblest effects depend on the full measurement and feeling of it. And it is to the abundant and marvellous expression of it by Turner, that I would direct especial attention, as being that which is in itself demonstrative of the highest knowledge and power—knowledge, in the constant use of lines of subdued slope in preference to steep or violent ascents, and in the perfect subjection of all such features, when they necessarily occur, to the larger masses; and power, in the inimitable statements of retiring space by mere painting of surface details, without the aid of crossing shadows, divided forms, or any other artifice.

The Caudebec, in the Rivers of France, is a fine instance of almost every fact which we have been pointing out. We

have in it, first, the clear expression of what takes place constantly among hills,—that the river, as it passes through the valley, will fall backwards and forwards from side to side, lying first, if I may so speak, with all its weight against the hills on the one side, and then against those on the other; so that, as here it is exquisitely told, in each of its circular sweeps the whole force of its current is brought deep and close to the bases of the hills, while the water on the side next the plain is shallow, deepening gradually. In consequence of this, the hills are cut away at their bases by the current, so that their slopes are interrupted by precipices mouldering to the water. Observe first, how nobly Turner has given us the perfect unity of the whole mass of hill, making us understand that every ravine in it has been cut gradually by streams. The first eminence, beyond the city, is not disjointed from, or independent of, the one succeeding, but evidently part of the same whole, originally united, separated only by the action of the stream between. The association of the second and third is still more clearly told, for we see that there has been a little longitudinal valley running along the brow of their former united mass, which after the ravine had been cut between, formed the two jags which Turner has given us at the same point in each of their curves. This great triple group has, however, been originally distinct from those beyond it; for we see that these latter are only the termination of the enormous even slope, which appears again on the extreme right, having been interrupted by the rise of the near hills. Observe how the descent of the whole series is kept gentle and subdued, never suffered to become steep except where it has been cut away by the river, the sudden precipice caused by which is exquisitely marked in the last two promontories, where they are defined against the bright horizon; and, finally, observe how, in the ascent of the nearest eminence beyond the city, without one cast shadow or any division of distances, every yard of surface is felt to be retiring by the mere painting of its details,—how we are permitted to walk up it, and along its top, and are carried, before we are half way up, a league or two forward into the picture. The difficulty of doing this, however, can scarcely be appreciated, except by an artist.

§ 20. Full statement of all these facts in various works of Turner, Caudebec, &c.

I do not mean to assert that this great painter is acquainted with the geological laws and facts he has thus illustrated; I am not aware whether he be or not; I merely wish to demonstrate, in points admitting of demonstration, that intense observation of, and strict adherence to truth, which it is impossible to demonstrate in its less tangible and more delicate manifestations. However I may *feel* the truth of every touch and line, I cannot *prove* truth, except in large and general features; and I leave it to the arbitration of every man's reason, whether it be not likely that the painter who is thus so rigidly faithful in great things that every one of his pictures might be the illustration of a lecture on the physical sciences, is not likely to be faithful also in small.

§ 21. The use of considering geological truths.

Honfleur, and the scene between Clairmont and Mauves, supply us with farther instances of the same grand simplicity of treatment; and the latter is especially remarkable for its expression of the furrowing of the hills by descending water, in the complete roundness and symmetry of their curves, and in the delicate and sharp shadows which are cast in the undulating ravines. It is interesting to compare with either of these noble works such hills as those of Claude, on the left of the picture marked 260 in the Dulwich Gallery. There is no detail nor surface in one of them; not an inch of ground for us to stand upon; we must either sit astride upon the edge, or fall to the bottom. I could not point to a more complete instance of mountain calumniation; nor can I oppose it more completely, in every circumstance, than with the Honfleur of Turner, already mentioned; in which there is not one edge nor division admitted, and yet we are permitted to climb up the hill from the town, and pass far into the mist along its top, and so descend mile after mile along the ridge to seaward, until, without one break in the magnificent unity of progress, we are carried down to the utmost horizon. And contrast the brown paint of Claude, which you can only guess to be meant for rock or soil because it *is* brown, with Turner's profuse, pauseless richness of feature, carried through all the enormous space—the unmeasured wealth of exquisite detail, over which the mind can dwell, and walk, and wander, and

§ 22. Expression of retiring surface by Turner contrasted with the work of Claude.

feast for ever, without finding either one break in its vast simplicity, or one vacuity in its exhaustless splendour.

But these, and hundreds of others which it is sin not to dwell upon—wooded hills and undulating moors of North England—rolling surges of park and forest of the South—soft and vine-clad ranges of French coteaux, casting their oblique shadows on silver leagues of glancing rivers,—and olive-whitened promontories of Alp and Apennine, are only instances of Turner's management of the lower and softer hills. In the bolder examples of his powers, where he is dealing with lifted masses of enormous mountain, we shall still find him as cautious in his use of violent slopes or vertical lines, and still as studied in his expression of retiring surface. We never get to the top of one of his hills without being tired with our walk; not by the steepness, observe, but by the stretch; for we are carried up towards the heaven by such delicate gradation of line, that we scarcely feel that we have left the earth before we find ourselves among the clouds. The Skiddaw, in the illustrations to Scott, is a noble instance of this majestic moderation. The mountain lies in the morning light, like a level vapour; its gentle lines of ascent are scarcely felt by the eye; it rises without effort or exertion, by the mightiness of its mass; every slope is full of slumber; and we know not how it has been exalted, until we find it laid as a floor for the walking of the eastern clouds. So again in the Fort Augustus, where the whole elevation of the hills depends on the soft lines of swelling surface which undulate back through leagues of mist, carrying us unawares higher and higher above the diminished lake, until, when we are all but exhausted with the endless distance, the mountains make their last spring, and bear us, in that instant of exertion, half way to heaven.

§ 23. The same moderation of slope in the contours of his higher hills.

I ought perhaps rather to have selected, as instances of mountain form, such elaborate works as the Oberwesel or Lake of Uri, but I have before expressed my dislike of speaking of such magnificent pictures as these by parts. And indeed all proper consideration of the hill drawing of Turner must be deferred until we are capable of testing it by the principles of beauty; for, after all, the most essential qualities of line,—those on

§ 24. The peculiar difficulty of investigating the more essential truths of hill outline.

which all right delineation of mountain character must depend, are those which are only to be explained or illustrated by appeals to our feeling of what is beautiful. There is an expression and a feeling about all the hill lines of nature, which I think I shall be able, hereafter, to explain; but it is not to be reduced to line and rule—not to be measured by angles or described by compasses—not to be chipped out by the geologist, or equated by the mathematician. It is intangible, incalculable—a thing to be felt, not understood—to be loved, not comprehended—a music of the eyes, a melody of the heart, whose truth is known only by its sweetness.

§ 25. Works of other modern artists.—Clarkson Stanfield.

I can scarcely, without repeating myself to tediousness, enter at present into proper consideration of the mountain drawing of other modern painters. We have, fortunately, several by whom the noble truths which we have seen so fully exemplified by Turner are also deeply felt and faithfully rendered; though there is a necessity, for the perfect statement of them, of such an unison of freedom of thought with perfect mastery over the greatest mechanical difficulties, as we can scarcely hope to see attained by more than one man in our age. Very nearly the same words which we used in reference to Stanfield's drawings of the central clouds, might be applied to his rendering of mountain truth. He occupies exactly the same position with respect to other artists in earth as in cloud. None can be said really to *draw* the mountain as he will, to have so perfect a mastery over its organic development; but there is, nevertheless, in all his works, some want of feeling and individuality. He has studied and mastered his subject to the bottom, but he trusts too much to that past study, and rather invents his hills from his possessed stores of knowledge, than expresses in them the fresh ideas received from nature. Hence, in all that he does, we feel a little too much that the hills are his own. We cannot swear to their being the particular crags and individual promontories which break the cone of Ischia, or shadow the waves of Maggiore. We are nearly sure, on the contrary, that nothing but the outline is local, and that all the filling up has been done in the study. Now, we have already shown (Sect. I. Chap. III.) that particular truths are more important than general ones,

and this is just one of the cases in which that rule especially applies. Nothing is so great a sign of truth and beauty in mountain drawing as the appearance of individuality—nothing is so great a proof of real imagination and invention, as the appearance that nothing has been imagined or invented. We ought to feel of every inch of mountain, that it *must* have existence in reality, that if we had lived near the place we should have known every crag of it, and that there must be people to whom every crevice and shadow of the picture is fraught with recollections, and coloured with associations. The moment the artist can make us feel this —the moment he can make us think that *he* has done nothing, that nature has done all—that moment he becomes ennobled, he proves himself great. As long as we remember him, we cannot respect him. We honour him most when we most forget him. He becomes great when he becomes invisible. And we may, perhaps, be permitted to express our hope that Mr. Stanfield will—our conviction that he must—if he would advance in his rank as an artist, attend more to local character, and give us generally less of the Stanfield limestone. He ought to study with greater attention the rocks which afford finer divisions and more delicate parts (slates and gneiss); and he ought to observe more fondly and faithfully those beautiful laws and lines of swell and curvature, by intervals of which nature sets off and relieves the energy of her peaked outlines. He is at present apt to be too rugged, and, in consequence, to lose size. Of his best manner of drawing hills, I believe I can scarcely give a better example than the Rocks of Suli, engraved in Finden's illustrations to Byron. It is very grand and perfect in all parts and points.

§ 26. Importance of particular and individual truth in hill drawing.

Copley Fielding is peculiarly graceful and affectionate in his drawing of the inferior mountains. But as with his clouds, so with his hills; as long as he keeps to silvery films of misty outline, or purple shadows mingled with the evening light, he is true and beautiful; but the moment he withdraws the mass out of its veiling mystery, he is lost. His worst drawings, therefore, are those on which he has spent most time; for he is sure to show weakness wherever he gives detail. We believe that all his errors proceed, as we

§ 27. Works of Copley Fielding. His high feeling.

observed before, from his not working with the chalk or pencil; and that if he would paint half the number of pictures in the year which he usually produces, and spend his spare time in hard dry study of forms, the half he painted would be soon worth double the present value of all. For he really has deep and genuine feeling of hill character—a far higher perception of space, elevation, incorporeal colour, and all those qualities which are the poetry of mountains, than any other of our water-colour painters; and it is an infinite pity that he should not give to these delicate feelings the power of realization, which might be attained by a little labour. A few thorough studies of his favourite mountains, Ben-Venue or Ben-Cruachan, in clear, strong, front chiaroscuro, allowing himself neither colour nor mist, nor any means of getting over the ground but downright drawing, would, we think, open his eyes to sources of beauty of which he now takes no cognizance. He ought not, however, to repeat the same subjects so frequently, as the casting about of the mind for means of varying them blunts the feelings to truth. And he should remember that an artist, who is not making progress, is nearly certain to be retrograding; and that progress is not to be made by working in the study, or by mere labour bestowed on the repetition of unchanging conceptions.

§ 28. Works of J. D. Harding and others.

J. D. Harding would paint mountains very nobly, if he made them of more importance in his compositions, but they are usually little more than backgrounds for his foliage or buildings; and it is his present system to make his backgrounds very slight. His colour is very beautiful: indeed, both his and Fielding's are far more refined than Stanfield's. We wish he would oftener take up some wild subject, dependent for interest on its mountain forms alone, as we should anticipate the highest results from his perfect drawing; and we think that such an exercise, occasionally gone completely through, would counteract a tendency which we perceive in his present distances, to become a little thin and cutting, if not incomplete.

The late G. Robson was a man most thoroughly acquainted with all the characteristics of our own island hills; and some of the outlines of John Varley showed very grand feeling of energy of form.

CHAPTER IV

OF THE FOREGROUND

We have now only to observe the close characteristics of the rocks and soils to which the large masses of which we have been speaking, owe their ultimate characters.

We have already seen that there exists a marked distinction between those stratified rocks whose beds are amorphous and without subdivision, as many limestones and sandstones, and those which are divided by lines of lamination, as all slates. The last kind of rock is the more frequent in nature, and forms the greater part of all hill scenery; it has, however, been successfully grappled with by few, even of the moderns, except Turner; while there is no single example of any aim at it or thought of it among the ancients, whose foregrounds, as far as it is possible to guess at their intention through their concentrated errors, are chosen from among the tufa and travertin of the lower Apennines, (the ugliest as well as the least characteristic rocks of nature,) and whose larger features of rock scenery, if we look at them with a predetermination to find in them a resemblance of *something*, may be pronounced at least liker the mountain limestone than anything else. I shall glance, therefore, at the general characters of these materials first, in order that we may be able to appreciate the fidelity of rock-drawing on which Salvator's reputation has been built.

§ 1. What rocks were the chief components of ancient landscape foreground.

The massive limestones separate generally into irregular blocks, tending to the form of cubes or parallelopipeds, and terminated by tolerably smooth planes. The weather, acting on the edges of these blocks, rounds them off; but the frost, which, while it cannot penetrate nor split the body of the stone, acts energetically on the angles, splits off the rounded fragments, and supplies sharp, fresh, and complicated edges. Hence the angles of such blocks are usually marked by a series of steps and fractures, in which the peculiar character of the

§ 2. Salvator's limestones. The real characters of the rock. Its fractures, and obtuseness of angles.

rock is most distinctly seen; the effect being increased in many limestones by the interposition of two or three thinner beds between the large strata of which the block has been a part; these thin laminæ breaking easily, and supplying a number of fissures and lines at the edge of the detached mass. Thus, as a general principle, if a rock have character anywhere, it will be on the angle, and however even and smooth its great planes may be, it will usually break into variety where it turns a corner. In one of the most exquisite pieces of rock truth ever put on canvass, the foreground of the Napoleon in the Academy, 1842, this principle was beautifully exemplified in the complicated fractures of the upper angle just where it turned from the light, while the planes of the rock were varied only by the modulation they owed to the waves. It follows from this structure that the edges of all rock being partially truncated, first by large fractures, and then by the rounding of the fine edges of these by the weather, perpetually present *convex* transitions from the light to the dark side, the planes of the rock almost always swelling a little *from* the angle.

§ 3. Salvator's acute angles caused by the meeting of concave curves.

Now it will be found throughout the works of Salvator, that his most usual practice was to give a *concave* sweep of the brush for his first expression of the dark side, leaving the paint darkest towards the light; by which daring and original method of procedure he has succeeded in covering his foregrounds with forms which approximate to those of drapery, of ribands, of crushed cocked hats, of locks of hair, of waves, leaves, or anything, in short, flexible or tough, but which of course are not only unlike, but directly contrary to the forms which nature has impressed on rocks.[1]

[1] I have cut out a passage in this place which insisted on the *angular* character of rocks,—not because it was false, but because it was incomplete, and I cannot explain it nor complete it without example. It is not the absence of curves, but the suggestion of *hardness through* curves, and of the under tendencies of the inward structure, which form the true characteristics of rock form; and Salvator, whom neither here nor elsewhere I have abused enough, is not wrong because he paints curved rocks, but because his curves are the curves of ribands and not of rocks; and the difference between rock curvature and other curvature I cannot explain verbally, but I hope to do it hereafter by illustration; and, at present, let the reader study the rock-drawing of the Mont St. Gothard subject, in the Liber Studiorum, and compare it with any

And the circular and sweeping strokes or stains which are dashed at random over their surfaces, only fail of destroying all resemblance whatever to rock structure from their frequent want of any meaning at all, and from the impossibility of our supposing any of them to be representative of shade. Now, if there be any part of landscape in which nature developes her principles of light and shade more clearly than another, it is rock; for the dark sides of fractured stone receive brilliant reflexes from the lighted surfaces, on which the shadows are marked with the most exquisite precision, especially because, owing to the parallelism of cleavage, the surfaces lie usually in directions nearly parallel. Hence every crack and fissure has its shadow and reflected light separated with the most delicious distinctness, and the organization and solid form of all parts are told with a decision of language, which, to be followed with anything like fidelity, requires the most transparent colour, and the most delicate and scientific drawing. So far are the works of the old landscape-painters from rendering this, that it is exceedingly rare to find a single passage in which the shadow can even be distinguished from the dark side—they scarcely seem to know the one to be darker than the other; and the strokes of the brush are not used to explain or express a form known or conceived, but are dashed and daubed about without any aim beyond the covering of the canvass. "A rock," the old masters appear to say to themselves, "is a great irregular, formless, characterless, lump; but it must have shade upon it, and any grey marks will do for that shade."

§ 4. Peculiar distinctness of light and shade in the rocks of nature.

§ 5. Peculiar confusion of both in the rocks of Salvator.

Finally, while few, if any, of the rocks of nature are untraversed by delicate and slender fissures, whose black sharp lines are the only means by which the peculiar quality in which rocks most differ from the other objects of the landscape, brittleness, can be effectually suggested, we look in vain among the blots and stains with which the rocks of ancient art are loaded, for any vestige or appearance of

§ 6. And total want of any expression of hardness or brittleness.

examples of Salvator to which he may happen to have access. All the account of rocks here given is altogether inadequate, and I only do not alter it because I first wish to give longer study to the subject.

fissure or splintering. Toughness and malleability appear to be the qualities whose expression is most aimed at; sometimes sponginess, softness, flexibility, tenuity, and occasionally transparency. Take, for instance, the foreground of Salvator, in No. 220 of the Dulwich Gallery. There is, on the right-hand side of it, an object, which I never walk through the room without contemplating for a minute or two with renewed solicitude and anxiety of mind, indulging in a series of very wild and imaginative conjectures as to its probable or possible meaning. I think there is reason to suppose that the artist intended it either for a very large stone, or for the trunk of a tree; but any decision as to its being either one or the other of these must, I conceive, be the extreme of rashness. It melts into the ground on one side, and might reasonably be conjectured to form a part of it, having no trace of woody structure or colour; but on the other side it presents a series of concave curves, interrupted by cogs like those of a water-wheel, which the boldest theorist would certainly not feel himself warranted in supposing symbolical of rock. The forms which this substance, whatever it be, assumes, will be found repeated, though in a less degree, in the foreground of No. 159, where they are evidently meant for rock.

§ 7. Instances in particular pictures.

Let us contrast with this system of rock-drawing, the faithful, scientific, and dexterous studies of nature which we find in the works of Clarkson Stanfield. He is a man especially to be opposed to the old masters, because he usually confines himself to the same rock subjects as they—the mouldering and furrowed crags of the secondary formation which arrange themselves more or less into broad and simple masses; and in the rendering of these it is impossible to go beyond him. Nothing can surpass his care, his firmness, or his success, in marking the distinct and sharp light and shade by which the form is explained, never confusing it with local colour, however richly his surface-texture may be given; while the wonderful play of line with which he will vary, and through which he will indicate, the regularity of stratification, is almost as instructive as that of nature herself. I cannot point to any of his works as better or more characteristic than others; but his Ischia, in the present British

§ 8. Compared with the works of Stanfield.

Institution, may be taken as a fair average example. The Botallack Mine, Cornwall, engraved in the Coast Scenery, gives us a very finished and generic representation of rock, whose primal organization has been violently affected by external influences. We have the stratification and cleavage indicated at its base, every fissure being sharp, angular, and decisive, disguised gradually as it rises by the rounding of the surface, and the successive furrows caused by the descent of streams. But the exquisite drawing of the foreground is especially worthy of notice. No huge concave sweeps of the brush, no daubing or splashing here. Every inch of it is brittle and splintery, and the fissures are explained to the eye by the most perfect, speaking light and shade,—we can stumble over the edges of them. The East Cliff, Hastings, is another very fine example, from the exquisite irregularity with which its squareness of general structure is varied and disguised. Observe how totally contrary every one of its lines is to the absurdities of Salvator. Stanfield's are all angular and straight, every apparent curve made up of right lines, while Salvator's are all sweeping and flourishing like so much penmanship. Stanfield's lines pass away into delicate splintery fissures. Salvator's are broad daubs throughout. Not one of Stanfield's lines is like another. Every one of Salvator's mocks all the rest. All Stanfield's curves, where his universal angular character is massed, as on the left-hand side, into large sweeping forms, are convex. Salvator's are every one concave.

§ 9. Their absolute opposition in every particular.

The foregrounds of J. D. Harding and rocks of his middle distances are also thoroughly admirable. He is not quite so various and undulating in his line as Stanfield, and sometimes, in his middle distances, is wanting in solidity, owing to a little confusion of the dark side and shadow with each other, or with the local colour. But his work, in near passages of fresh-broken, sharp-edged rock, is absolute perfection, excelling Stanfield in the perfect freedom and facility with which his fragments are splintered and scattered; true in every line without the least apparent effort. Stanfield's best works are laborious, but Harding's rocks fall from under his hand as if they had just crashed down the hillside, flying on the instant into lovely form. In colour also he incomparably surpasses

§ 10. The rocks of J. D. Harding.

Stanfield, who is apt to verge upon mud, or be cold in his grey. The rich, lichenous, and changeful warmth, and delicate weathered greys of Harding's rock, illustrated as they are by the most fearless, firm, and unerring drawing, render his wild pieces of torrent shore the finest things, next to the work of Turner, in English foreground art.

J. B. Pyne has very accurate knowledge of limestone rock, and expresses it clearly and forcibly; but it is much to be regretted that this clever artist appears to be losing all sense of colour and is getting more and more mannered in execution, evidently never studying from nature except with the previous determination to Pynize everything.[1]

Before passing to Turner, let us take one more glance at the foregrounds of the old masters, with reference, not to their management of rock, which is comparatively a rare component part of their foregrounds, but to the common soil which they were obliged to paint constantly, and whose forms and appearances are the same all over the world. A steep bank of loose earth of any kind, that has been at all exposed to the weather, contains in it, though it may not be three feet high, features capable of giving high gratification to a careful observer. It is almost a fac-simile of a mountain slope of soft and decomposing rock; it possesses nearly as much variety of character, and is governed by laws of organization no less rigid. It is furrowed in the first place by undulating

§ 11. Characters of loose earth and soil.

[1] A passage which I happened to see in an Essay of Mr. Pyne's, in the Art Union, about nature's "foisting rubbish" upon the artist, sufficiently explains the cause of this decline. If Mr. Pyne will go to nature, as all great men have done, and as all men who mean to be great must do, that is not merely to be *helped*, but to be *taught* by her; and will once or twice take her gifts, without looking them in the mouth, he will most assuredly find—and I say this in no unkind or depreciatory feeling, for I should say the same of all artists who are in the habit of only sketching nature, and not studying her—that *her* worst is better than *his* best. I am quite sure that if Mr. Pyne, or any other painter who has hitherto been very careful in his choice of subject, will go into the next turnpike road, and taking the first four trees that he comes to in the hedge, give them a day each, drawing them leaf for leaf, as far as may be, and even their smallest boughs with as much care as if they were rivers, or an important map of a newly-surveyed country, he will find, when he has brought them all home, that at least three out of the four are better than the best he ever invented. Compare Part III. Sect. I. Chap. III. § 12, 13, (the reference in the note ought to be to Chap. XV. § 7.)

lines, by the descent of the rain, little ravines, which are cut precisely at the same slope as those of the mountain, and leave ridges scarcely less graceful in their contour, and beautifully sharp in their chiselling. Where a harder knot of ground or a stone occurs, the earth is washed from beneath it, and accumulates above it, and there we have a little precipice connected by a sweeping curve at its summit with the great slope, and casting a sharp dark shadow; where the soil has been soft, it will probably be washed away underneath until it gives way, and leaves a jagged, hanging, irregular line of fracture; and all these circumstances are explained to the eye in sunshine with the most delicious clearness; every touch of shadow being expressive of some particular truth of structure, and bearing witness to the symmetry into which the whole mass has been reduced. Where this operation has gone on long, and vegetation has assisted in softening the outlines, we have our ground brought into graceful and irregular curves, of infinite variety, but yet always so connected with each other, and guiding to each other, that the eye never feels them as *separate* things, nor feels inclined to count them, nor perceives a likeness in one to the other; they are not repetitions of each other, but are different parts of one system. Each would be imperfect without the one next to it.

§ 12. Its exceeding grace and fulness of feature.

Now it is all but impossible to express distinctly the particulars wherein this fine character of curve consists, and to show in definite examples, what it is which makes one representation right, and another wrong. The ground of Teniers, for instance, in No. 139 in the Dulwich Gallery, is an example of all that is wrong. It is a representation of the forms of shaken and disturbed soil, such as we should see here and there after an earthquake, or over the ruins of fallen buildings. It has not one contour nor character of the soil of nature, and yet I can scarcely tell you why, except that the curves repeat one another, and are monotonous in their flow, and are unbroken by the delicate angle and momentary pause with which the feeling of nature would have touched them, and are disunited; so that the eye leaps from this to that, and does not pass from one to the other without being able to stop, drawn on by the continuity of line; neither is there

§ 13. The ground of Teniers.

any undulation or furrowing of watermark, nor in one spot or atom of the whole surface, is there distinct explanation of form to the eye by means of a determined shadow. All is mere sweeping of the brush over the surface with various ground colours, without a single indication of character by means of real shade.

§ 14. Importance of these minor parts and points.

Let not these points be deemed unimportant; the truths of form in common ground are quite as valuable (let me anticipate myself for a moment), quite as beautiful, as any others which nature presents, and in lowland landscape they present us with a species of line which it is quite impossible to obtain in any other way,—the alternately flowing and broken line of mountain scenery, which, however small its scale, is always of inestimable value, contrasted with the repetitions of organic form which we are compelled to give in vegetation. A really great artist dwells on every inch of exposed soil with care and delight, and renders it one of the most essential, speaking, and pleasurable parts of his composition. And be it remembered, that the man who, in the most conspicuous part of his foreground, will violate truth with every stroke of the pencil, is not likely to be more careful in other parts of it; and that in the little bits which I fix upon for animadversion, I am not pointing out solitary faults, but only the most characteristic examples of the falsehood which is everywhere, and which renders the whole foreground one mass of contradictions and absurdities. Nor

§ 15. The observance of them is the real distinction between the master and the novice.

do I myself see wherein the great difference lies between a master and a novice, except in the rendering of the finer truths, of which I am at present speaking. To handle the brush freely, and to paint grass and weeds with accuracy enough to satisfy the eye, are accomplishments which a year or two's practice will give any man; but to trace among the grass and weeds those mysteries of invention and combination, by which nature appeals to the intellect—to render the delicate fissure, and descending curve, and undulating shadow of the mouldering soil, with gentle and fine finger, like the touch of the rain itself—to find even in all that appears most trifling or contemptible, fresh evidence of the constant working of the Divine power "for glory and for beauty," and to teach it and proclaim

it to the unthinking and the unregardless—this, as it is the peculiar province and faculty of the master-mind, so it is the peculiar duty which is demanded of it by the Deity.

§ 16. Ground of Cuyp.

It would take me no reasonable nor endurable time, if I were to point out one half of the various kinds and classes of falsehood which the inventive faculties of the old masters succeeded in originating, in the drawing of foregrounds. It is not this man, nor that man, nor one school, nor another; all agree in entire repudiation of everything resembling facts, and in the high degree of absurdity of what they substitute for them. Even Cuyp, who evidently saw and studied *near* nature, as an artist should do—not fishing for idealities, but taking what nature gave him, and thanking her for it—even he appears to have supposed that the drawing of the earth might be trusted to chance or imagination, and, in consequence, strews his banks with lumps of dough, instead of stones.

§ 17. And of Claude.

Perhaps, however, the "beautiful foregrounds" of Claude afford the most remarkable instances of childishness and incompetence of all. That of his morning landscape, with the large group of trees and high single-arched bridge, in the National Gallery, is a pretty fair example of the kind of error which he constantly falls into. I will not say anything of the agreeable composition of the three banks, rising one behind another from the water. I merely affirm that it amounts to a demonstration that all three were painted in the artist's study, without any reference to nature whatever. In fact, there is quite enough intrinsic evidence in each of them to prove this, seeing that what appears to be meant for vegetation upon them, amounts to nothing more than a green stain on their surfaces, the more evidently false because the leaves of the trees twenty yards farther off are all perfectly visible and distinct; and that the sharp lines with which each cuts against that beyond it, are not only such as crumbling earth could never show or assume, but are maintained through their whole progress ungraduated, unchanging, and unaffected by any of the circumstances of varying shade to which every one of nature's lines is inevitably subjected. In fact, the whole arrangement is the impotent struggle of a tyro to express, by successive edges, that approach of earth which he finds himself incapable

of expressing by the drawing of the surface. Claude wished to make you understand that the edge of his pond came nearer and nearer: he had probably often tried to do this with an unbroken bank, or a bank only varied by the delicate and harmonized anatomy of nature; and he had found that owing to his total ignorance of the laws of perspective, such efforts on his part invariably ended in his reducing his pond to the form of a round O, and making it look perpendicular. Much comfort and solace of mind, in such unpleasant circumstances, may be derived from instantly dividing the obnoxious bank into a number of successive promontories, and developing their edges with completeness and intensity. Every schoolgirl's drawing, as soon as her mind has arrived at so great a degree of enlightenment as to perceive that perpendicular water is objectionable, will supply us with edifying instances of this unfailing resource; and this foreground of Claude's is only one out of the thousand cases in which he has been reduced to it. And if it be asked, how the proceeding differs from that of nature, I have only to point to nature herself, as she is drawn in the foreground of Turner's Mercury and Argus, a case precisely similar to Claude's, of earthy crumbling banks cut away by water. It will be found in this picture (and I am now describing nature's work and Turner's with the same words) that the whole distance is given by retirement of solid surface; and that if ever an edge is expressed, it is only felt for an instant, and then lost again; so that the eye cannot stop at it and prepare for a long jump to another like it, but is guided over it, and round it, into the hollow beyond; and thus the whole receding mass of ground, going back for more than a quarter of a mile, is made completely *one*—no part of it is separated from the rest for an instant—it is all united, and its modulations are *members*, not *divisions* of its mass. But those modulations are countless—heaving here, sinking there—now swelling, now mouldering, now blending, now breaking—giving, in fact, to the foreground of this universal master, precisely the same qualities which we have before seen in his hills, as Claude gave to his foreground precisely the same qualities which we had before found in *his* hills,—infinite unity, in the one case, finite division in the other.

§ 18. The entire weakness and childishness of the latter.

§ 19. Compared with the work of Turner.

Let us, then, having now obtained some insight into the principles of the old masters in foreground drawing, contrast them throughout with those of our great modern master. The investigation of the excellence of Turner's drawing becomes shorter and easier as we proceed, because the great distinctions between his work and that of other painters are the same, whatever the object or subject may be; and after once showing the general characters of the particular specific forms under consideration, we have only to point, in the works of Turner, to the same principles of infinity and variety in carrying them out, which we have before insisted upon with reference to other subjects.

§ 20. General features of Turner's foreground.

The Upper Fall of the Tees, Yorkshire, engraved in the England series, may be given as a standard example of rock-drawing to be opposed to the work of Salvator. We have, in the great face of rock which divides the two streams, horizontal lines which indicate the real direction of the strata, and these same lines are given in ascending perspective all along the precipice on the right. But we see also on the central precipice fissures absolutely vertical, which inform us of one series of joints dividing these horizontal strata; and the exceeding smoothness and evenness of the precipice itself inform us that it has been caused by a great separation of substance in the direction of another more important line of joints, running in a direction across the river. Accordingly, we see on the left that the whole summit of the precipice is divided again and again by this great series of joints into vertical beds, which lie against each other with their sides toward us, and are traversed downwards by the same vertical lines traceable on the face of the central cliff. Now, let me direct especial attention to the way in which Turner has marked over this general and grand unity of structure, the modifying effects of the weather and the torrent. Observe how the whole surface of the hill above the precipice on the left[1] is brought into one smooth, unbroken curvature of gentle convexity, until it comes to the edge of the precipice, and then, just on the angle (compare § 2), breaks into the multiplicity of

§ 21. Geological structure of his rocks in the Fall of the Tees.

§ 22. Their convex surfaces and fractured edges.

[1] In the light between the waterfall and the large dark mass on the extreme right.

fissure which marks its geological structure. Observe how every one of the separate blocks, into which it divides, is rounded and convex in its salient edges turned to the weather, and how every one of their inward angles is marked clear and sharp by the determined shadow and transparent reflex. Observe how exquisitely graceful are all the curves of the convex surfaces, indicating that every one of them has been modelled by the winding and undulating of running water; and how gradually they become steeper as they descend, until they are torn down into the face of the precipice. Finally observe the exquisite variety of all the touches which express fissure or shade; every one in varying directions and with new forms, and yet throughout indicating that perfect parallelism which at once explained to us the geology of the rock, and falling into one grand mass, treated with the same simplicity of light and shade which a great portrait painter adopts in treating the features of the human face; which, though each has its own separate chiaroscuro, never disturb the wholeness and grandeur of the head, considered as one ball or mass. So here, one deep and marked piece of shadow indicates the greatest proximity of the rounded mass; and from this every shade becomes fainter and fainter, until all are lost in the obscurity and dimness of the hanging precipice and the shattering fall. Again, see how the same fractures just upon the edge take place with the central cliff above the right-hand fall, and how the force of the water is told us by the confusion of debris accumulated in its channel. In fact, the great quality about Turner's drawings which more especially proves their transcendent truth, is the capability they afford us of reasoning on past and future phenomena, just as if we had the actual rocks before us; for this indicates not that one truth is given, nor another, not that a pretty or interesting morsel has been selected here and there, but that the whole truth has been given, with all the relations of its parts; so that we can pick and choose our points of pleasure or of thought for ourselves, and reason upon the whole with the same certainty which we should after having climbed and hammered over the rocks bit by bit. With this drawing before him, a geologist could give a lecture upon the whole system of aqueous erosion, and speculate as safely upon the past and

§ 23. And perfect unity.

§ 24. Various parts whose history is told us by the details of the drawing.

future states of this very spot, as if he were standing and getting wet with the spray. He would tell you, at once, that the waterfall was in a state of rapid recession; that it had once formed a wide cataract just at the spot where the figure is sitting on the heap of debris; and that when it was there, part of it came down by the channel on the left, its bed being still marked by the delicately chiselled lines of fissure. He would tell you that the foreground had also once been the top of the fall, and that the vertical fissures on the right of it were evidently then the channel of a side stream. He would tell you that the fall was then much lower than it is now, and that being lower, it had less force, and cut itself a narrower bed; and that the spot where it reached the higher precipice is marked by the expansion of the wide basin which its increased violence has excavated, and by the gradually increasing concavity of the rocks below, which we see have been hollowed into a complete vault by the elastic bound of the water. But neither he nor I could tell you with what exquisite and finished marking of every fragment and particle of soil or rock, both in its own structure and the evidence it bears of these great influences, the whole of this is confirmed and carried out.

With this inimitable drawing we may compare the rocks in the foreground of the Llanthony. These latter are not divided by joints, but into thin horizontal and united beds, which the torrent in its times of flood has chiselled away, leaving one exposed under another, with the sweeping marks of its eddies upon their edges. And here we have an instance of an exception to a general rule, occasioned by particular and local action. We have seen that the action of water over any surface *universally*, whether falling, as in rain, or sweeping, as a torrent, induces convexity of form. But when we have rocks *in situ*, as here, exposed at their edges to the violent action of an eddy, that eddy will cut a vault or circular space for itself, (as we saw on a large scale with the high waterfall) and we have a concave curve interrupting the general contours of the rock. And thus Turner (while every edge of his masses is rounded, and, the moment we rise above the level of the water, all is convex) has interrupted the great contours of his strata with concave curves, precisely where the last waves of the torrent have

§ 25. Beautiful instance of exception to general rules in the Llanthony.

swept against the exposed edges of the beds. Nothing could more strikingly prove the depth of that knowledge by which every touch of this consummate artist is regulated, that universal command of subject which never acts for a moment on anything conventional or habitual, but fills every corner and space with new evidence of knowledge, and fresh manifestation of thought.

§ 26. Turner's drawing of detached blocks of weathered stone.

The Lower Fall of the Tees, with the chain-bridge, might serve us for an illustration of all the properties and forms of vertical beds of rock, as the upper fall has of horizontal; but we pass rather to observe, in detached pieces of foreground, the particular modulation of parts which cannot be investigated in the grand combinations of general mass.

The blocks of stone which form the foreground of the Ulleswater are, I believe, the finest example in the world of the finished drawing of rocks which have been subjected to violent aqueous action. Their surfaces seem to palpitate from the fine touch of the waves, and every part of them is rising or falling, in soft swell or gentle depression, though the eye can scarcely trace the fine shadows on which this chiselling of the surface depends. And with all this, every block of them has individual character, dependent on the expression of the angular lines of which its contours were first formed, and which is retained and felt through all the modulation and melting of the water-worn surface. And what is done here in the most important part of the picture, to be especially attractive to the eye, is often done by Turner with lavish and overwhelming power, in the accumulated debris of a wide foreground, strewed with the ruin of ages, as, for instance, in the Junction of the Greta and Tees, where he has choked the torrent bed with a mass of shattered rock, thrown down with the profusion and carelessness of nature herself; and yet every separate block is a study (and has evidently been drawn from nature), chiselled and varied in its parts, as if it were to be the chief member of a separate subject; yet without ever losing, in a single instance, its subordinate position, or occasioning, throughout the whole accumulated multitude, the repetition of a single line.

I consider cases like these, of perfect finish and new conception, applied and exerted in the drawing of every

member of a confused and almost countlessly divided system, about the most wonderful, as well as the most characteristic passages of Turner's foregrounds. It is done not less marvellously, though less distinctly, in the individual parts of all his broken ground, as in examples like these of separate blocks. The articulation of such a passage as the nearest bank, in the picture we have already spoken of at so great length, the Upper Fall of the Tees, might serve us for a day's study, if we were to go into it part by part; but it is impossible to do this, except with the pencil; we can only repeat the same general observations, about eternal change and unbroken unity, and tell you to observe how the eye is kept throughout on solid and retiring surfaces, instead of being thrown, as by Claude, on flat and equal edges. You cannot find a single edge in Turner's work; you are everywhere kept upon round surfaces, and you go back on these you cannot tell how—never taking a leap, but progressing imperceptibly along the unbroken bank, till you find yourself a quarter of a mile into the picture, beside the figure at the bottom of the waterfall.

§ 27. And of complicated foreground.

Finally, the bank of earth on the right of the grand drawing of Penmaen Mawr, may be taken as the standard of the representation of soft soil modelled by descending rain; and may serve to show us how exquisite in character are the resultant lines, and how full of every species of attractive and even sublime quality, if we only are wise enough not to scorn the study of them. The higher the mind, it may be taken as an universal rule, the less it will scorn that which appears to be small or unimportant; and the rank of a painter may always be determined by observing how he uses, and with what respect he views the minutiæ of nature. Greatness of mind is not shown by admitting small things, but by making small things great under its influence. He who can take no interest in what is small, will take false interest in what is great; he who cannot make a bank sublime, will make a mountain ridiculous.

§ 28. And of loose soil.

It is not until we have made ourselves acquainted with these simple facts of form, as they are illustrated by the slighter works of Turner, that we can become at all competent to enjoy the combination of all, in such works as

the Mercury and Argus, or Bay of Baiæ, in which the mind is at first bewildered by the abundant outpouring of the master's knowledge. Often as I have paused before these noble works, I never felt on returning to them as if I had ever seen them before; for their abundance is so deep and various that the mind, according to its own temper at the time of seeing, perceives some new series of truths rendered in them, just as it would on revisiting a natural scene; and detects new relations and associations of these truths which set the whole picture in a different light at every return to it. And this effect is especially caused by the management of the foreground; for the more marked objects of the picture may be taken one by one, and thus examined and known; but the foregrounds of Turner are so united in all their parts that the eye cannot take them by divisions, but is guided from stone to stone, and bank to bank, discovering truths totally different in aspect, according to the direction in which it approaches them, and approaching them in a different direction, and viewing them as part of a new system, every time that it begins its course at a new point. One lesson, however, we are invariably taught by all, however approached or viewed,—that the work of the Great Spirit of nature is as deep and unapproachable in the lowest as in the noblest objects,—that the Divine mind is as visible in its full energy of operation on every lowly bank and mouldering stone, as in the lifting of the pillars of heaven, and settling the foundation of the earth; and that to the rightly perceiving mind, there is the same infinity, the same majesty, the same power, the same unity, and the same perfection, manifest in the casting of the clay as in the scattering of the cloud, in the mouldering of the dust as in the kindling of the day-star.

§ 29. The unison of all in the ideal foregrounds of the Academy pictures.

§ 30. And the great lesson to be received from all.

SECTION V

OF TRUTH OF WATER

CHAPTER I.

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY THE ANCIENTS

Of all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance or combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it as the source of all the changefulness and beauty which we have seen in clouds; then as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace; then as, in the form of snow, it robes the mountains it has made, with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen; then as it exists in the foam of the torrent—in the iris which spans it, in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and glancing river; finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied, unconquerable power, the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea; what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and for beauty? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling? It is like trying to paint a soul.

§ 1. Sketch of the functions and infinite agency of water.

To suggest the ordinary appearance of calm water—to lay on canvass as much evidence of surface and reflection as may make us understand that water is meant—is, perhaps, the easiest task of art; and even ordinary running or falling water may be sufficiently rendered, by observing careful curves of projection with a dark ground, and breaking a little white over it, as we see done with judgment and truth by Ruysdael. But to paint the actual play of hue on the reflective surface, or to give the forms and fury of water when it begins to show itself—to give the flashing and rocket-like velocity of a noble

§ 2. The ease with which a common representation of it may be given. The impossibility of a faithful one.

cataract, or the precision and grace of the sea wave, so exquisitely modelled, though so mockingly transient—so mountainous in its form, yet so cloud-like in its motion—with its variety and delicacy of colour, when every ripple and wreath has some peculiar passage of reflection upon itself alone, and the radiating and scintillating sunbeams are mixed with the dim hues of transparent depth and dark rock below;—to do this perfectly, is beyond the power of man; to do it even partially, has been granted to but one or two, even of those few who have dared to attempt it.

§ 3. Difficulty of properly dividing the subject.

As the general laws which govern the appearances of water have equal effect on all its forms, it would be injudicious to treat the subject in divisions; for the same forces which govern the waves and foam of the torrent, are equally influential on those of the sea; and it will be more convenient to glance generally at the system of water-painting of each school and artist, than to devote separate chapters to the examination of the lake, river, or sea-painting of all. We shall, therefore, vary our usual plan, and look first at the water-painting of the ancients; then at that of the moderns generally; lastly, at that of Turner.

§ 4. Inaccuracy of study of water-effect among all painters.

It is necessary in the outset to state briefly one or two of the optical conditions by which the appearance of the surface of water is affected; to describe them all would require a separate essay, even if I possessed the requisite knowledge, which I do not. The accidental modifications under which general laws come into play are innumerable, and often, in their extreme complexity, inexplicable, I suppose, even by men of the most extended optical knowledge. What I shall here state are a few only of the broadest laws verifiable by the reader's immediate observation, but of which, nevertheless, I have found artists frequently ignorant; owing to their habit of sketching from nature without thinking or reasoning, and especially of finishing at home. It is not often, I believe, that an artist draws the reflections in water as he sees them; over large spaces, and in weather that is not very calm, it is nearly impossible to do so; when it is possible, sometimes in haste, and sometimes in idleness, and sometimes under the idea of improving nature, they are slurred or misrepresented; it is so easy to give

something like a suggestive resemblance of calm water, that, even when the landscape is finished from nature, the water is merely indicated as something that may be done at any time, and then, in the home work, come the cold leaden greys with some, and the violent blues and greens with others, and the horizontal lines with the feeble, and the bright touches and sparkles with the dexterous, and everything that is shallow and commonplace with all. Now, the fact is, that there is hardly a roadside pond or pool which has not as much landscape *in* it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all manner of hues, of variable, pleasant light out of the sky; nay, the ugly gutter, that stagnates over the drain bars, in the heart of the foul city, is not altogether base; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark, serious blue of far-off sky, and the passing of pure clouds. It is at your own will that you see in that despised stream, either the refuse of the street, or the image of the sky—so it is with almost all other things that we unkindly despise. Now, this far-seeing is just the difference between the great and the vulgar painter; the common man *knows* the roadside pool is muddy, and draws its mud; the great painter sees beneath and behind the brown surface what will take him a day's work to follow, but he follows it, cost what it will. And if painters would only go out to the nearest common, and take the nearest dirty pond among the furze, and draw that thoroughly, not considering that it is water that they are drawing, and that water must be done in a certain way; but drawing determinedly what they *see*, that is to say, all the trees, and their shaking leaves, and all the hazy passages of disturbing sunshine; and the bottom seen in the clearer little bits at the edge, and the stones of it, and all the sky, and the clouds far down in the middle, drawn as completely, and more delicately they must be, than the real clouds above, they would come home with such a notion of water-painting as might save me and everyone else all trouble of writing more about the matter; but now they do nothing of the kind, but take the ugly, round, yellow surface for granted, or else improve it, and, instead of giving that refined, complex, delicate, but saddened and gloomy reflection in the

polluted water, they clear it up with coarse flashes of yellow, and green, and blue, and spoil their own eyes, and hurt ours; failing, of course, still more hopelessly in touching the pure, inimitable light of waves thrown loose; and so Canaletto is still thought to have painted canals, and Vandevelde and Backhuysen to have painted sea, and the uninterpreted streams and maligned sea hiss shame upon us from all their rocky beds and hollow shores.

§ 5. Difficulty of treating this part of the subject.

I approach this part of my subject with more despondency than any other, and that for several reasons; first, the water-painting of all the elder landscape painters, excepting a few of the better passages of Claude and Ruysdael, is so execrable, so beyond all expression and explanation bad; and Claude's and Ruysdael's best so cold and valueless, that I do not know how to address those who like such painting; I do not know what their sensations are respecting sea. I can perceive nothing in Vandevelde or Backhuysen of the lowest redeeming merit; no power, no presence of intellect—or evidence of perception—of any sort or kind; no resemblance—even the feeblest—of anything natural; no invention—even the most sluggish—of anything agreeable. Had they given us staring green seas with hatchet edges, such as we see Her Majesty's ships so-and-so fixed into by the heads or sterns in the first room of the Royal Academy, the admiration of them would have been comprehensible; there being a natural predilection in the mind of men for green waves with curling tops, but not for clay and wool; so that though I can understand, in some sort, why people admire everything else in old art, why they admire Salvator's rocks, and Claude's foregrounds, and Hobbima's trees, and Paul Potter's cattle, and Jan Steen's pans; and while I can perceive in all these likings a root which seems right and legitimate, and to be appealed to; yet when I find they can even *endure* the *sight* of a Backhuysen on their room walls (I speak seriously) it makes me hopeless at once. I may be wrong, or they may be wrong, but at least I can conceive of no principle or opinion common between us, which either can address or understand in the other; and yet I am wrong in this want of conception, for I know that Turner once liked Vandevelde, and I can trace the evil influence of Vandevelde on most of his early sea-painting, but

Turner certainly could not have liked Vandevelde without *some* legitimate cause. Another discouraging point is that I cannot catch a wave, nor Daguerreotype it, and so there is no coming to pure demonstration; but the forms and hues of water must always be in some measure a matter of dispute and feeling, and the more so because there is no perfect or even tolerably perfect sea painting to refer to: the sea never has been, and I fancy never will be nor can be painted; it is only suggested by means of more or less spiritual and intelligent conventionalism; and though Turner has done enough to suggest the sea mightily and gloriously, after all it is by conventionalism still, and there remains so much that is unlike nature, that it is always possible for those who do not feel his power to justify their dislike, on very sufficient and reasonable grounds; and to maintain themselves obstinately unreceptant of the good, by insisting on the deficiency which no mortal hand can supply, and which commonly is most manifest on the one hand, where most has been achieved on the other.

With calm water the case is different. Facts are ascertainable and demonstrable there, and by the notice of one or two of the simplest, we may obtain some notion of the little success and intelligence of the elder painters in this easier field, and so prove their probable failure in contending with greater difficulties.

§ 6. General laws which regulate the phenomena of water. First, The imperfection of its reflective surface.

First: Water of course, owing to its transparency, possesses not a perfectly reflective surface, like that of speculum metal, but a surface whose reflective power is dependent on the angle at which the rays to be reflected fall. The smaller this angle, the greater are the number of rays reflected. Now, according to the number of rays reflected is the force of the image of objects above, and according to the number of rays transmitted is the perceptibility of objects below the water. Hence the visible transparency and reflective power of water are in inverse ratio. In looking down into it from above, we receive transmitted rays which exhibit either the bottom or the objects floating in the water; or else if the water be deep and clear, we receive very few rays, and the water looks black. In looking along water we receive reflected rays, and therefore the image of objects above it. Hence, in shallow water

on a level shore the bottom is seen at our feet, clearly; it becomes more and more obscure as it retires, even though the water do not increase in depth, and at a distance of twelve or twenty yards—more or less according to our height above the water—becomes entirely invisible, lost in the lustre of the reflected surface.

Second: The brighter the objects reflected, the larger the angle at which reflection is visible; it is always to be remembered that, strictly speaking, only light objects are reflected, and that the darker ones are seen only in proportion to the number of rays of light that they can send; so that a dark object comparatively loses its power to affect the surface of water, and the water in the space of a dark reflection is seen partially with the image of the object, and partially transparent. It will be found on observation that under a bank—suppose with dark trees above showing spaces of bright sky, the bright sky is reflected distinctly, and the bottom of the water is in those spaces not seen; but in the dark spaces of reflection we see the bottom of the water, and the colour of that bottom and of the water itself mingles with and modifies that of the colour of the trees casting the dark reflection.

§ 7. The inherent hue of water modifies dark reflections, and does not affect bright ones.

This is one of the most beautiful circumstances connected with water surface, for by these means a variety of colour and a grace and evanescence are introduced in the reflection otherwise impossible. Of course at great distances even the darkest objects cast distinct images, and the hue of the water cannot be seen, but in near water the occurrence of its own colour modifying the dark reflections while it leaves light ones unaffected is of infinite value.

Take, by way of example, an extract from my own diary at Venice.

"May 17th, 4 P.M. Looking east the water is calm, and reflects the sky and vessels, with this peculiarity; the sky, which is pale blue, is in its reflection of the same kind of blue, only a little deeper; but the *vessels' hulls, which are black, are reflected in pale sea-green, i.e.*, the natural colour of the water under sunlight; while the *orange masts* of the vessels, wet with a recent shower, are reflected *without change of colour*, only not quite so bright as above. One ship has a white, another a red stripe," (I ought to have said

horizontal along the gunwales,) "*of these the water takes no notice.*"

"What is curious, a boat passes across with white and dark figures, the water reflects the dark ones in green, and misses out all the white; this is chiefly owing to the dark images being opposed to the bright reflected sky."

I have left the passage about the white and red stripe, because it will be useful to us presently; all that I wish to insist upon here is the showing of the local colour (pea green) of the water in the spaces which were occupied by dark reflections, and the unaltered colour of the bright ones.

§ 8. Water takes no shadow.

Third: Clear water takes no shadow, and that for two reasons; A perfect surface of speculum metal takes no shadow (this the reader may instantly demonstrate for himself), and a perfectly transparent body as air takes no shadow, hence water, whether transparent or reflective, takes no shadow.

But shadows, or the forms of them, appear on water frequently and sharply: it is necessary carefully to explain the causes of these, as they are one of the most eminent sources of error in water-painting.

First; Water in shade is much more reflective than water in sunlight. Under sunlight the local colour of the water is commonly vigorous and active, and forcibly affects, as we have seen, all the dark reflections, commonly diminishing their depth. Under shade, the reflective power is in a high degree increased,[1] and it will be found most frequently that the forms of shadows are expressed on the surface of water, not by actual shade, but by more genuine reflection of objects above. This is another most important and valuable circumstance, and we owe to it some phenomena of the highest beauty.

A very muddy river, as the Arno for instance at Florence, is seen during sunshine of its own yellow colour, rendering all reflections discoloured and feeble. At twilight it recovers its reflective power to the fullest extent, and the mountains of Carrara are seen reflected in it as clearly as if it were a crystalline lake. The Mediterranean, whose

[1] I state this merely as a fact: I am unable satisfactorily to account for it on optical principles, and were it otherwise the investigation would be of little interest to the general reader, and little value to the artist.

determined blue yields to hardly any modifying colour in daytime, receives at evening the image of its rocky shores. On our own seas, seeming shadows are seen constantly cast in purple and blue, upon pale green. These are no shadows, but the pure reflection of dark or blue sky above, seen in the shadowed space, refused by the local colour of the sea in the sun-lighted spaces, and turned more or less purple by the opposition of the vivid green.

§ 9. Modification of dark reflections by shadow.

We have seen however above, that the local colour of water, while it comparatively refuses dark reflections, accepts bright ones without deadening them. Hence when a shadow is thrown across a space of water of strong local colour, receiving, alternately, light and dark reflections, it has no power of increasing the reflectiveness of the water in the bright spaces, still less of diminishing it; hence, on all the dark reflections it is seen more or less distinctly, on all the light ones it vanishes altogether.

Let us take an instance of the exquisite complexity of effect induced by these various circumstances in co-operation.

Suppose a space of clear water showing the bottom under a group of trees, showing sky through their branches, casting shadows on the surface of the water, which we will suppose also to possess some colour of its own. Close to us, we shall see the bottom, with the shadows of the trees clearly thrown upon it, and the colour of the water seen in its genuineness by transmitted light. Farther off, the bottom will be gradually lost sight of, but it will be seen in the dark reflections much farther than in the light ones. At last it ceases to affect even the former, and the pure surface effect takes place. The blue bright sky is reflected truly, but the dark trees are reflected imperfectly, and the colour of the water is seen instead. Where the shadow falls on these dark reflections a darkness is seen plainly, which is found to be composed of the pure clear reflection of the dark trees; when it crosses the reflection of the sky, the shadow of course, being thus fictitious, vanishes.

Farther, of course on whatever dust and other foulness may be present in water, real shadow falls clear and dark in proportion to the quantity of solid substance present. On very muddy rivers, real shadow falls in sunlight nearly as sharply as on land; on our own sea, the apparent shadow

caused by increased reflection, is much increased in depth by the chalkiness and impurity of the water.

Farther, when surface is rippled, every ripple, up to a certain variable distance on each side of the spectator, and at a certain angle between him and the sun, varying with the size and shape of the ripples, reflects to him a small image of the sun. Hence those dazzling fields of expanding light so often seen upon the sea.

Any object that comes between the sun and these ripples, takes from them the power of reflecting the sun, and in consequence, all their light; hence any intervening objects cast apparent shadows upon such spaces of intense force, and of the exact shape, and in the exact place of real shadows, and yet which are no more real shadows than the withdrawal of an image of a piece of white paper from a mirror is a shadow on the mirror. Farther, in all shallow water, more or less in proportion to its shallowness, but in some measure, I suppose, up to depths of forty or fifty fathoms, and perhaps more, the local colour of the water depends in great measure on light reflected from the bottom. This, however, is especially manifest in clear rivers like the Rhone, where the absence of the light reflected from below forms an apparent shadow, often visibly detached some distance from the floating object which casts it.

10. Examples on the water of the Rhone.

The following extract from my own diary at Geneva, with the subsequent one, which is a continuation of that already given in part, at Venice, will illustrate both this and the other points we have been stating:

"GENEVA, *21st April, Morning.*

"The sunlight falls from the cypresses of Rousseau's Island straight towards the bridge. The shadows of the bridge and of the trees fall on the water in leaden purple, opposed to its general hue of aquamarine green. This green colour is caused by the light being reflected from the bottom, though the bottom is not seen; as is evident by its becoming paler towards the middle of the river, where the water shoals, on which pale part the purple shadow of the small bridge falls most forcibly, which shadow, however, is still only apparent, being the absence of this reflected light associated with the increased reflective power of the water,

which in those spaces reflects blue sky above. A boat swings in the shoal water; its reflection is cast in a transparent pea-green, which is considerably darker than the pale aquamarine of the surface at the spot. Its shadow is detached from it just about half the depth of the reflection, which, therefore, forms a bright green light between the keel of the boat and its shadow; where the shadow cuts the reflection, the reflection is darkest and something like the true colour of the boat; where the shadow falls out of the reflection, it is of a leaden purple, pale. The boat is at an angle of about 20° below. Another boat nearer, in deeper water, shows no shadow whatsoever, and the reflection is marked by its transparent green, while the surrounding water takes a lightish blue reflection from the sky."

The above notes, after what has been said, require no comment; but one more case must be stated belonging to rough water. Every large wave of the sea is in ordinary circumstances divided into, or rather covered by, innumerable smaller waves, each of which, in all probability, from some of its edges or surfaces reflects the sunbeams; and hence result a glitter, polish, and vigorous light over the whole flank of the wave, which are, of course, instantly withdrawn within the space of a cast shadow, whose form, therefore, though it does not affect the great body or ground of the water in the least, is sufficiently traceable by the withdrawal of the high lights; also every string and wreath of foam above or within the wave takes real shadow, and thus adds to the impression.

I have not stated one-half of the circumstances which produce or influence effects of shadow on water; but lest I should confuse or weary the reader, I leave him to pursue the subject for himself; enough having been stated to establish this general principle, that whenever shadow is seen on clear water, and, in a measure, even on foul water, it is not, as on land, a dark shade subduing where it falls the sunny general hue to a lower tone; but it is a space of an entirely different colour, subject itself, by its susceptibility of reflection, to infinite varieties of depth and hue, and liable, under certain circumstances, to disappear altogether; and that, therefore, whenever we have to paint such shadows, it is not only the hue of the water itself that we have to consider, but all the circumstances by which in the

position attributed to them such shaded spaces could be affected.

Fourth; If water be rippled, the side of every ripple next to us reflects a piece of the sky, and the side of every ripple farthest from us reflects a piece of the opposite shore, or of whatever objects may be beyond the ripple. But as we soon lose sight of the farther sides of the ripples on the retiring surface, the whole rippled space will then be reflective of the sky only. Thus, where calm distant water receives reflections of high shores, every extent of rippled surface appears as a bright line interrupting that reflection with the colour of the sky.

§ 11. Effect of ripple on distant water.

Fifth; When a ripple or swell is seen at such an angle as to afford a view of its farther side, it carries the reflection of objects farther down than calm water would. Therefore all motion in water elongates reflections, and throws them into confused vertical lines. The real amount of this elongation is not distinctly visible, except in the case of very bright objects, and especially of lights, as of the sun, moon, or lamps by a river shore, whose reflections are hardly ever seen as circles or points, which of course they are on perfectly calm water, but as long streams of tremulous light.

§ 12. Elongation of reflections by moving water.

But it is strange that while we are constantly in the habit of seeing the reflection of the sun, which ought to be a mere circle, elongated into a stream of light extending from the horizon to the shore, the elongation of the reflection of a sail or other object to one-half of this extent is received, if represented in a picture, with incredulity by the greater number of spectators. In one of Turner's Venices the image of the white latine sails of the principal boat is about twice as long as the sails themselves. I have heard the truth of this simple effect disputed over and over again by intelligent persons, and yet on any water so exposed as the lagoons of Venice, the periods are few and short when there is so little motion as that the reflection of sails a mile off shall not affect the swell within six feet of the spectator.

There is, however, a strange arbitrariness about this elongation of reflection, which prevents it from being truly felt. If we see on an extent of lightly swelling water surface the image of a bank of white clouds, with masses of higher accumulation at intervals, the water will not usually

reflect the whole bank in an elongated form, but it will commonly take the eminent parts, and reflect them in long straight columns of defined breadth, and miss the intermediate lower parts altogether; and even in doing this it will be capricious, for it will take one eminence, and miss another, with no apparent reason; and often when the sky is covered with white clouds, some of those clouds will cast long towerlike reflections, and others none, so arbitrarily that the spectator is often puzzled to find out which are the accepted and which the refused.

In many cases of this kind it will be found rather that the eye is, from want of use and care, insensible to the reflection than that the reflection is not there; and a little thought and careful observation will show us that what we commonly suppose to be a surface of uniform colour is, indeed, affected more or less by an infinite variety of hues, prolonged, like the sun image, from a great distance, and that our apprehension of its lustre, purity, and even of its surface, is in no small degree dependent on our feeling of these multitudinous hues, which the continual motion of that surface prevents us from analyzing or understanding for what they are.

§ 13. Effect of rippled water on horizontal and inclined images.

Sixth; Rippled water, of which we can see the farther side of the waves, will reflect a perpendicular line clearly, a bit of its length being given on the side of each wave, and easily joined by the eye. But if the line slope, its reflection will be excessively confused and disjointed; and if horizontal, nearly invisible. It was this circumstance which prevented the red and white stripe of the ships at Venice, noticed above, from being visible.

§ 14. To what extent reflection is visible from above.

Seventh; Every reflection is the image in reverse of just so much of the objects beside the water, as we could see if we were placed as much under the level of the water as we are actually above it. If an object be so far back from the bank, that if we were five feet under the water-level we could not see it over the bank, then, standing five feet above the water, we shall not be able to see its image under the reflected bank. Hence the reflection of all objects that have any slope back from the water is shortened, and at last disappears as we rise above it. Lakes seen from a

great height appear like plates of metal set in the landscape, reflecting the sky but none of their shores.

Eighth; Any given point of the object above the water is reflected, if reflected at all, at some spot in a vertical line beneath it, so long as the plane of the water is horizontal. On rippled water a slight deflection sometimes takes place, and the image of a vertical tower will slope a little away from the wind, owing to the casting of the image on the sloping sides of the ripples. On the sloping sides of large waves the deflection is in proportion to the slope. For rough practice, after the slope of the wave is determined, let the artist turn his paper until it becomes horizontal, and then paint the reflections of any object upon it as on level water, and he will be right.

§ 15. Deflection of images on agitated water.

Such are the most common and general optical laws which are to be taken into consideration in the painting of water. Yet, in the application of them, as tests of good or bad water-painting, we must be cautious in the extreme. An artist may know all these laws, and comply with them, and yet paint water execrably; and he may be ignorant of every one of them, and, in their turn, and in certain places, violate every one of them, and yet paint water gloriously. Thousands of exquisite effects take place in nature, utterly inexplicable, and which can be believed only while they are seen; the combinations and applications of the above laws are so varied and complicated that no knowledge or labour could, if applied analytically, keep pace with them. Constant and eager watchfulness, and portfolios filled with actual statements of water-effect, drawn on the spot and on the instant, are worth more to the painter than the most extended optical knowledge; without these all his knowledge will end in a pedantic falsehood. With these it does not matter how gross or how daring here and there may be his violations of this or that law; his very transgressions will be admirable.

§ 16. Necessity of watchfulness as well as of science. Licenses, how taken by great men.

It may be said, that this is a dangerous principle to advance in these days of idleness. I cannot help it; it is true, and must be affirmed. Of all contemptible criticism, the most to be contemned is that which punishes great works of art when they fight without armour, and refuses to

feel or acknowledge the great spiritual refracted sun of their truth, because it has risen at a false angle, and burst upon them before its appointed time. And yet, on the other hand, let it be observed that it is not feeling, nor fancy, nor imagination, so called, that I have put before science, but watchfulness, experience, affection, and trust in nature; and farther let it be observed that there is a difference between the license taken by one man and another, which makes one license admirable, and the other punishable; and that this difference is of a kind sufficiently discernible by every earnest person, though it is not so explicable as that we can beforehand say where and when, or even to whom, the license is to be forgiven. In the Paradise of Tintoret, in the Academy of Venice, the Angel is seen in the distance driving Adam and Eve out of the garden. Not, for Tintoret, the leading to the gate with consolation or counsel: his strange ardour of conception is seen here as everywhere. Full speed they fly, the angel and the human creatures; the angel wrapt in an orb of light floats on, stooped forward in his fierce flight, and does not touch the ground; the chastised creatures rush before him in abandoned terror. All this might have been invented by another, though in other hands it would assuredly have been offensive; but one circumstance which completes the story could have been thought of or dared by none but Tintoret. The Angel casts a SHADOW before him towards Adam and Eve.

Now that a globe of light should cast a shadow is a license as far as mere optical matters are concerned, of the most audacious kind. But how beautiful is the circumstance in its application here, showing that the angel, who is light to all else around him, is darkness to those whom he is commissioned to banish for ever.

I have before noticed the license of Rubens in making his horizon an oblique line. His object is to carry the eye to a given point in the distance. The road winds to it, the clouds fly at it, the trees nod to it, a flock of sheep scamper towards it, a carter points his whip at it, his horses pull for it, the figures push for it, and the horizon slopes to it. If the horizon had been horizontal, it would have embarrassed everything and everybody.

In Turner's Pas de Calais there is a buoy poised on the ridge of a near wave. It casts its reflection vertically down

the flank of the wave, which slopes steeply. I cannot tell whether this is a license or a mistake; I suspect the latter, for the same thing occurs not unfrequently in Turner's seas; but I am almost certain that it would have been done wilfully in this case, even had the mistake been pointed out, for the vertical line is necessary to the picture, and the eye is so little accustomed to catch the real bearing of the reflections on the slopes of waves that it does not feel the fault.

§ 17. Various licenses or errors in water-painting of Claude, Cuyp, Vandevelde.

In one of the smaller rooms of the Uffizii at Florence, off the Tribune, there are two so-called Claudes; one a pretty wooded landscape, I think a copy, the other a marine with architecture, very sweet and genuine. The sun is setting at the side of the picture, it casts a long stream of light upon the water. This stream of light is oblique, and comes from the horizon, where it is under the sun, to a point near the centre of the picture. If this had been done as a license, it would be an instance of most absurd and unjustifiable license, as the fault is detected by the eye in a moment, and there is no occasion nor excuse for it. But I imagine it to be an instance rather of the harm of imperfect science. Taking his impression instinctively from nature, Claude usually did what is right and put his reflection vertically under the sun; probably, however, he had read in some treatise on optics that every point in this reflection was in a vertical plane between the sun and spectator; or he might have noticed walking on the shore that the reflection came straight from the sun to his feet, and intending to indicate the position of the spectator, drew in his next picture the reflection sloping to this supposed point, the error being excusable enough, and plausible enough to have been lately revived and systematized.[1]

[1] Parsey's "Convergence of Perpendiculars." I have not space here to enter into any lengthy exposure of this mistake, but reasoning is fortunately unnecessary, the appeal to experiment being easy. Every picture is the representation, as before stated, of a vertical plate of glass, with what might be seen through it, drawn on its surface. Let a vertical plate of glass be taken, and wherever it be placed, whether the sun be at its side or at its centre, the reflection will always be found in a vertical line under the sun, parallel with the side of the glass. The pane of any window looking to sea is all the apparatus necessary for this experiment, and yet it is not long since this very principle was

In the picture of Cuyp, No. 83 in the Dulwich Gallery, the post at the end of the bank casts three or four radiating reflections. This is visibly neither license nor half science, but pure ignorance. Again, in the picture attributed to Paul Potter, No. 176, Dulwich Gallery, I believe most people must feel, the moment they look at it, that there is something wrong with the water, that it looks odd, and hard, and like ice or lead; and though they may not be able to tell the reason of the impression—for when they go near they will find it smooth and lustrous, and prettily painted—yet they will not be able to shake off the unpleasant sense of its being like a plate of bad mirror set in a model landscape among moss, rather than like a pond. The reason is, that while this water receives clear reflections from the fence and hedge on the left, and is everywhere smooth and evidently capable of giving true images, it yet reflects none of the cows.

In the Vandevelde (113) there is not a line of ripple or swell in any part of the sea; it is absolutely windless, and the near boat casts its image with great fidelity, which being unprolonged downwards informs us that the calm is perfect (Rule V.), and being unshortened informs us that we are on a level with the water, or nearly so. (Rule VII.) Yet underneath the vessel on the right, the grey shade which stands for reflection breaks off immediately, descending like smoke a little way below the hull, then leaving the masts and sails entirely unrecorded. This I imagine to be not ignorance, but unjustifiable license. Vandevelde evidently desired to give an impression of great extent of surface, and thought that if he gave the reflection more faithfully, as the tops of the masts would come down to the nearest part of the surface, they would destroy the evidence of distance, and appear to set the ship above the boat instead of beyond it. I doubt not in such awkward hands that such would indeed have been the case, but he is not on that account to be excused for painting his surface with grey horizontal lines, as is done by nautically-disposed children; for no destruction of distance in the ocean is so serious a loss as that of its liquidity. It is better to feel a want of extent in the sea,

disputed with me by a man of much taste and information, who supposed Turner to be wrong in drawing the reflection straight down at the side of his picture, as in his Lancaster Sands, and innumerable other instances.

than an extent which we might walk upon, or play at billiards upon.

§ 18. And Canaletto.

Among all the pictures of Canaletto, which I have ever seen, and they are not a few, I remember but one or two where there is any variation from one method of treatment of the water. He almost always covers the whole space of it with one monotonous ripple, composed of a coat of well-chosen, but perfectly opaque and smooth sea-green, covered with a certain number, I cannot state the exact average, but it varies from three hundred and fifty to four hundred and upwards, according to the extent of canvass to be covered, of white concave touches, which are very properly symbolical of ripple.

And, as the canal retires back from the eye, he very geometrically diminishes the size of his ripples, until he arrives at an even field of apparently smooth water. By our sixth rule, this rippling water as it retires should show more and more of the reflection of the sky above it, and less and less of that of objects beyond it, until, at two or three hundred yards down the canal, the whole field of water should be one even grey or blue, the colour of the sky receiving no reflections whatever of other objects. What does Canaletto do? Exactly in proportion as he retires, he displays *more* and *more* of the reflection of objects, and less and less of the sky, until, three hundred yards away, all the houses are reflected as clear and sharp as in a quiet lake.

This, again, is wilful and inexcusable violation of truth, of which the reason, as in the last case, is the painter's consciousness of weakness. It is one of the most difficult things in the world to express the light reflection of the blue sky on a distant ripple, and to make the eye understand the cause of the colour, and the motion of the apparently smooth water, especially where there are buildings above to be reflected, for the eye never understands the want of the reflection. But it is the easiest and most agreeable thing in the world to give the inverted image: it occupies a vast space of otherwise troublesome distance in the simplest way possible, and is understood by the eye at once. Hence Canaletto is glad, as any other inferior workman would be, not to say obliged, to give the reflections in the distance. But when he comes up close to the spectator,

he finds the smooth surface just as troublesome near, as the ripple would have been far off. It is a very nervous thing for an ignorant artist to have a great space of vacant smooth water to deal with, close to him, too far down to take reflections from buildings, and yet which must be made to look flat and retiring and transparent. Canaletto, with his sea-green, did not at all feel himself equal to anything of this kind, and had therefore no resource but in the white touches above described, which occupy the alarming space without any troublesome necessity for knowledge or invention, and supply by their gradual diminution some means of expressing retirement of surface. It is easily understood, therefore, why he should adopt this system, which is just what any awkward workman would naturally cling to, trusting to the inaccuracy of observation of the public to secure him from detection.

§ 19. Why unpardonable.

Now in all these cases it is not the mistake or the license itself, it is not the infringement of this or that law which condemns the picture, but it is the spirit and habit of mind in which the license is taken, the cowardice or bluntness of feeling, which infects every part alike, and deprives the whole picture of vitality. Canaletto, had he been a great painter, might have cast his reflections wherever he chose, and rippled the water wherever he chose, and painted his sea sloping if he chose, and neither I nor any one else should have dared to say a word against him; but he is a little and a bad painter, and so continues everywhere multiplying and magnifying mistakes, and adding apathy to error, until nothing can any more be pardoned in him. If it be but remembered that every one of the surfaces of those multitudinous ripples is in nature a mirror which catches, according to its position, either the image of the sky or of the silver beaks of the gondolas, or of their black bodies and scarlet draperies, or of the white marble, or the green sea-weed on the low stones, it cannot but be felt that those waves would have something more of colour upon them than that opaque dead green. Green they are by their own nature, but it is a transparent and emerald hue, mixing itself with the thousand reflected tints without overpowering the weakest of them; and thus, in every one of those individual waves, the truths of colour are contradicted by Canaletto by the thousand.

Venice is sad and silent now, to what she was in his time; the canals are choked gradually one by one, and the foul water laps more and more sluggishly against the rent foundations; but even yet could I but place the reader at the early morning on the quay below the Rialto, when the market-boats, full laden, float into groups of golden colour, and let him watch the dashing of the water about their glittering steelly heads, and under the shadows of the vine leaves, and show him the purple of the grapes and the figs, and the glowing of the scarlet gourds carried away in long streams upon the waves, and among them, the crimson fish baskets, plashing and sparkling, and flaming as the morning sun falls on their wet tawny sides, and above, the painted sails of the fishing-boats, orange and white, scarlet and blue, and better than all such florid colour, the naked, bronzed, burning limbs of the seamen, the last of the old Venetian race, who yet keep the right Giorgione colour on their brows and bosoms, in strange contrast with the sallow sensual degradation of the creatures that live in the cafés of the Piazza, he would not be merciful to Canaletto any more.

§ 20. The Dutch painters of sea.

Yet even Canaletto, in relation to the truths he had to paint, is spiritual, faithful, powerful, compared to the Dutch painters of sea. It is easily understood why his green paint and concave touches should be thought expressive of the water on which the real colours are not to be discerned but by attention, which is never given; but it is not so easily understood, considering how many there are who love the sea, and look at it, that Vandevelde and such others should be tolerated. As I before said, I feel utterly hopeless in addressing the admirers of these men, because I do not know what it is in their works which is supposed to be like nature. Foam appears to me to curdle and cream on the wave sides and to fly, flashing from their crests, and not to be set astride upon them like a peruke; and waves appear to me to fall, and plunge, and toss, and nod, and crash over, and not to curl up like shavings; and water appears to me, when it is grey, to have the grey of stormy air mixed with its own deep, heavy, thunderous, threatening blue, and not the grey of the first coat of cheap paint on a deal door; and many other such things appear to me which, as far as I can conjecture by

what is admired of marine painting, appear to no one else; yet I shall have something more to say about these men presently, with respect to the effect they have had upon Turner; and something more, I hope, hereafter, with the help of illustration.

§ 21. Ruysdael, Claude, and Salvator.

There is a sea-piece of Ruysdael's in the Louvre[1] which, though nothing very remarkable in any quality of art, is at least forceful, agreeable, and, as far as it goes, natural; the waves have much freedom of action, and power of colour; the wind blows hard over the shore, and the whole picture may be studied with profit as a proof that the deficiency of colour and everything else in Backhuysen's works, is no fault of the Dutch sea. There is sublimity and power in every field of nature from the pole to the line; and though the painters of one country are often better and greater, universally, than those of another, this is less because the subjects of art are wanting anywhere, than because one country or one age breeds mighty and thinking men, and another none.

Ruysdael's painting of falling water and brook scenery is also generally agreeable—more than agreeable it can hardly be considered. There appears no exertion of mind in any of his works; nor are they calculated to produce either harm or good by their feeble influence. They are good furniture pictures, unworthy of praise, and undeserving of blame.

The seas of Claude are the finest pieces of water-painting in ancient art. I do not say that I like them, because they appear to me selections of the particular moment when the sea is most insipid and characterless; but I think that they are exceedingly true to the forms and time selected, or at

[1] In the last edition of this work was the following passage:—"I wish Ruysdael had painted one or two rough seas. I believe if he had he might have saved the unhappy public from much grievous victimizing, both in mind and pocket, for he would have shown that Vandevelde and Backhuysen were not quite sea-deities." The writer has to thank the editor of Murray's Handbook of Painting in Italy for pointing out the oversight. He had passed many days in the Louvre before the above passage was written, but had not been in the habit of pausing long anywhere except in the last two rooms, containing the pictures of the Italian school. The conjecture, however, shows that he had not ill-estimated the power of Ruysdael; nor does he consider it as in anywise unfitting him for the task he has undertaken, that for every hour passed in galleries he has passed days on the sea shore.

least that the fine instances of them are so, of which there are exceedingly few.

On the right hand of one of the marines of Salvator, in the Pitti palace, there is a passage of sea reflecting the sunrise, which is thoroughly good, and very like Turner; the rest of the picture, as the one opposite to it, utterly virtueless. I have not seen any other instance of Salvator's painting water with any care; it is usually as conventional as the rest of his work, yet conventionalism is perhaps more tolerable in water-painting than elsewhere; and if his trees and rocks had been good, the rivers might have been generally accepted without objection.

§ 22. Nicolo Poussin.

The merits of Poussin as a sea or water painter may, I think, be sufficiently determined by the Deluge in the Louvre, where the breaking up of the fountains of the deep is typified by the capsizing of a wherry over a weir.

In the outer porch of St. Mark's at Venice, among the mosaics on the roof, there is a representation of the deluge. The ground is dark blue; the rain is represented in bright white undulating parallel stripes; between these stripes is seen the massy outlines of the ark, a bit between each stripe, very dark and hardly distinguishable from the sky; but it has a square window with a bright golden border, which glitters out conspicuously, and leads the eye to the rest—the sea below is almost concealed with dead bodies.

On the font of the church of San Frediano at Lucca, there is a representation of—possibly—the Israelites and Egyptians in the Red Sea. The sea is typified by undulating bands of stone, each band composed of three plies (almost the same type is to be seen in the glass-painting of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as especially at Chartres). These bands would perhaps be hardly felt as very aqueous, but for the fish, which are interwoven with them in a complicated manner, their heads appearing at one side of every band, and their tails at the other.

Both of these representatives of deluge, archaic and rude as they are, I consider better, more suggestive, more inventive, and more natural, than Poussin's. Indeed, this is not saying anything very depreciatory, as regards the St. Mark's one, for the glittering of the golden window through the rain is wonderfully well conceived, and almost deceptive,

looking as if it had just caught a gleam of sunlight on its panes, and there is something very sublime in the gleam of this light above the floating corpses. But the other instance is sufficiently grotesque and imperfect, and yet, I speak with perfect seriousness, it is, I think, very far preferable to Poussin's.

On the other hand, there is a just medium between the meanness and apathy of such a conception as his, and the extravagance, still more contemptible, with which the subject has been treated in modern days.[1] I am not aware that I can refer to any instructive example of this intermediate course, for I fear the reader is by this time wearied of hearing of Turner, and the plate of Turner's picture of the deluge is so rare that it is of no use to refer to it.

§ 23. Venetians and Florentines. Conclusion.

It seems exceedingly strange that the great Venetian painters should have left us no instance, as far as I know, of any marine effects carefully studied. As already noted, whatever passages of sea occur in their backgrounds are merely broad extents of blue or green surface, fine in colour, and coming dark usually against the horizon, well enough to be understood as sea (yet even that not always without the help of a ship), but utterly unregarded in all questions of completion and detail. The water even in Titian's landscape is almost always violently though grandly conventional, and seldom forms an important feature. Among the religious schools very sweet motives occur, but nothing which for a moment can be considered as real water-painting. Perugino's sea is usually very beautifully felt; his river in the fresco of S^ta. Maddalena at Florence is freely indicated, and looks level and clear; the reflections of the trees given with a rapid zigzag stroke of the brush. On the whole, I suppose that the best imitations of level water surface to be found in ancient art are in the clear Flemish landscapes. Cuyp's are usually very satisfactory, but even the best of these attain nothing more than the agreeable suggestion of calm pond or river. Of any tolerable representation of water in agitation, or under any circumstances that bring

[1] I am here, of course, speaking of the treatment of the subject as a landscape only; many mighty examples of its conception occur where the sea, and all other adjuncts, are entirely subservient to the figures, as with Raffaelle and M. Angelo.

out its power and character, I know no instance; and the more capable of noble treatment the subject happens to be, the more manifest invariably is the painter's want of feeling in every effort, and of knowledge in every line.

CHAPTER II

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY THE MODERNS

THERE are few men among modern landscape painters, who cannot paint quiet water at least suggestively, if not faithfully. Those who are incapable of doing this, would scarcely be considered artists at all; and anything like the ripples of Canaletto, or the black shadows of Vandevelde, would be looked upon as most unpromising, even in the work of a novice. Among those who most fully appreciate and render the qualities of space and surface in calm water, perhaps Copley Fielding stands first. His expanses of windless lake are among the most perfect passages of his works; for he can give surface as well as depth, and make his lake look not only clear, but, which is far more difficult, lustrous. He is less dependent than most of our artists upon reflections; and can give substance, transparency, and extent, where another painter would be reduced to paper; and he is exquisitely refined in his expression of distant breadth, by the delicate line of ripple interrupting the reflection, and by aërial qualities of colour. Nothing, indeed, can be purer or more refined than his general feeling of lake sentiment, were it not for a want of simplicity—a fondness for pretty, rather than impressive colour, and a consequent want of some of the higher expression of repose.

§ 1. General power of the moderns in painting quiet water. The lakes of Fielding.

Hundreds of men might be named, whose works are highly instructive in the management of calm water. De Wint is singularly powerful and certain, exquisitely bright, and vigorous in colour. The late John Varley produced some noble passages. I have seen, some seven years ago, works by J. Holland, which were, I think, as near perfection as water-

§ 2. The calm rivers of De Wint, J. Holland, etc.

colour can be carried—for *bona fide* truth, refined and finished to the highest degree. But the power of modern artists is not brought out until they have greater difficulties to struggle with. Stand for half an hour beside the fall of Schaffhausen, on the north side where the rapids are long, and watch how the vault of water first bends, unbroken, in pure, polished velocity, over the arching rocks at the brow of the cataract, covering them with a dome of crystal twenty feet thick—so swift that its motion is unseen except when a foam globe from above darts over it like a falling star; and how the trees are lighted above it under all their leaves, at the instant that it breaks into foam; and how all the hollows of that foam burn with green fire like so much shattering chrysoprase; and how, ever and anon, startling you with its white flash, a jet of spray leaps hissing out of the fall, like a rocket, bursting in the wind and driven away in dust, filling the air with light; and how, through the curdling wreaths of the restless, crashing abyss below, the blue of the water, paled by the foam in its body, shows purer than the sky through white rain-cloud; while the shuddering iris stoops in tremulous stillness over all, fading and flushing alternately through the choking spray and shattered sunshine, hiding itself at last among the thick golden leaves which toss to and fro in sympathy with the wild water; their dripping masses lifted at intervals, like sheaves of loaded corn, by some stronger gush from the cataract, and bowed again upon the mossy rocks as its roar dies away; the dew gushing from their thick branches through drooping clusters of emerald herbage, and sparkling in white threads along the dark rocks of the shore, feeding the lichens which chase and chequer them with purple and silver. I believe, when you have stood by this for half an hour, you will have discovered that there is something more in nature than has been given by Ruysdael. Probably you will not be much disposed to think of any mortal work at the time; but when you look back to what you have seen, and are inclined to compare it with art, you will remember—or ought to remember—Nesfield. He is a man of extraordinary feeling, both for the colour and the spirituality of a great waterfall; exquisitely delicate in his management of the changeful veil

§ 3. The character of bright and violent falling water.

§ 4. As given by Nesfield.

of spray or mist; just in his curves and contours; and unequalled in colour, except by Turner. None of our water-colour painters can approach him in the management of the variable hues of clear water over weeded rocks; but his feeling for it often leads him a little too far, and, like Copley Fielding, he loses sight of simplicity and dignity for the sake of delicacy or prettiness. His waterfalls are, however, unequalled in their way; and, if he would remember, that in all such scenes there is much gloom as well as much splendour, and relieve the lustre of his attractive passages of colour with more definite and prevalent greys, and give a little more substance to parts of his picture unaffected by spray, his work would be nearly perfect. His seas are also most instructive; a little confused in chiaroscuro, but refined in form and admirable in colour.

§ 5. The admirable water-drawing of J. D. Harding.

J. D. Harding is, I think, nearly unequalled in the *drawing* of running water. I do not know what Stanfield would do; I have never seen an important piece of torrent drawn by him; but I believe even he could scarcely contend with the magnificent *abandon* of Harding's brush. There is perhaps nothing which tells more in the drawing of water than decisive and swift execution; for, in a rapid touch the hand naturally falls into the very curve of projection which is the absolute truth; while in slow finish, all precision of curve and character is certain to be lost, except under the hand of an unusually powerful master. But Harding has both knowledge and velocity, and the fall of his torrents is beyond praise; impatient, chafing, substantial, shattering, crystalline, and capricious; full of various form, yet all apparently instantaneous and accidental, nothing conventional, nothing dependent upon parallel lines or radiating curves; all broken up and dashed to pieces over the irregular rock, and yet all in unity of motion. The colour also of his *falling* and bright water is very perfect; but in the dark and level parts of his torrents he has taken up a bad grey, which has hurt some of his best pictures. His grey in shadows under rocks or dark reflections is admirable; but it is when the stream is in full light, and unaffected by reflections in distance, that he gets wrong. We believe that the fault is in a want of expression of darkness in the colour, making it

§ 6. His colour and painting of sea.

appear like a positive hue of the water, for which it is much too dead and cold.

Harding seldom paints sea, and it is well for Stanfield that he does not, or the latter would have to look to his crown. All that we have seen from his hand is, as coast sea, quite faultless; we only wish he would paint it more frequently; always, however, with a veto upon French fishing-boats. In the Exhibition of 1842, he spoiled one of the most superb pieces of seashore and sunset which modern art has produced, with the pestilent square sail of one of these clumsy craft, which the eye could not escape from.

Before passing to our great sea painter, we must again refer to the works of Copley Fielding. It is with his sea as with his sky, he can only paint one, and that an easy one, but it is, for all that, an impressive and a true one. No man has ever given, with the same flashing freedom, the race of a running tide under a stiff breeze, nor caught, with the same grace and precision, the curvature of the breaking wave, arrested or accelerated by the wind. The forward fling of his foam, and the impatient run of his surges, whose quick, redoubling dash we can almost hear, as they break in their haste upon their own bosoms, are nature itself, and his sea grey or green was, nine years ago, very right, as colour; always a little wanting in transparency, but never cold or toneless. Since that time, he seems to have lost the sense of greenness in water, and has verged more and more on the purple and black, with unhappy results. His sea was always dependent for effect on its light or dark relief against the sky, even when it possessed colour; but it now has lost all local colour and transparency together, and is little more than a study of chiaroscuro in an exceedingly ill chosen grey. Besides, the perpetual repetition of the same idea is singularly weakening to the mind. Fielding, in all his life, can only be considered as having produced *one* sea picture. The others are duplicates. He ought to go to some sea of perfect clearness and brilliant colour, as that on the coast of Cornwall, or of the Gulf of Genoa, and study it sternly in broad daylight, with no black clouds nor drifting rain to help him out of his difficulties. He would then both learn his strength and add to it.

§ 7. The sea of Copley Fielding. Its exceeding grace and rapidity.

But there is one point in all his seas deserving especial praise—a marked aim at *character*. He desires, especially in his latter works, not so much to produce an agreeable picture, a scientific piece of arrangement, or delightful melody of colour, as to make us feel the utter desolation, the cold, withering, frozen, hopelessness of the continuous storm and merciless sea. And this is peculiarly remarkable in his denying himself all colour, just in the little bits which an artist of inferior mind would paint in sienna and cobalt. If a piece of broken wreck is allowed to rise for an instant through the boiling foam, though the blue stripe of a sailor's jacket, or a red rag of a flag would do all our hearts good, we are not allowed to have it; it would make us too comfortable, and prevent us from shivering and shrinking as we look, and the artist, with admirable intention, and most meritorious self-denial, expresses his piece of wreck with a dark, cold brown. Now we think this aim and effort worthy of the very highest praise, and we only wish the lesson were taken up and acted on by our other artists; but Mr. Fielding should remember that nothing of this kind can be done with success unless by the most studied management of the general tones of the picture; for the eye, deprived of all means of enjoying the grey hues, merely as a contrast to bright points, becomes painfully fastidious in the quality of the hues themselves, and demands for its satisfaction such melodies and richness of grey as may in some degree atone to it for the loss of points of stimulus. That grey which would be taken frankly and freely for an expression of gloom, if it came behind a yellow sail or a red cap, is examined with invidious and merciless intentness when there is nothing to relieve it, and, if not able to bear the investigation, if neither agreeable nor variable in its hue, renders the picture weak instead of impressive, and unpleasant instead of awful.

§ 8. Its high aim at character.

§ 9. But deficiency in the requisite quality of greys.

And indeed the management of nature might teach him this; for though, when using violent contrasts, she frequently makes her gloom somewhat monotonous, the moment she gives up her vivid colour, and depends upon her desolation, that moment she begins to steal the greens into her sea-grey, and the browns and yellows into her cloud-grey, and the expression of

§ 10. Variety of the greys of nature.

variously tinted light through all. Nor is Mr. Fielding without a model in art, for the Land's End, and Lowestoffe, and Snowstorm (in the Academy, 1842,) of Turner, are nothing more than passages of the most hopeless, desolate, uncontrasted greys, and yet are three of the very finest pieces of colour that have come from his hand. And we sincerely hope that Mr. Fielding will gradually feel the necessity of such studied melodies of quiet colour, and will neither fall back into the old tricks of contrast, nor continue to paint with purple and ink. If he will only make a few careful studies of grey from the mixed atmosphere of spray, rain, and mist of a gale that has been three days hard at work, not of a rainy squall, but of a persevering and powerful storm, and not where the sea is turned into milk and magnesia by a chalk coast, but where it breaks pure and green on grey slate or white granite, as along the cliffs of Cornwall, we think his pictures would present some of the finest examples of high intention and feeling to be found in modern art.

§ 11. Works of Stanfield. His perfect knowledge and power.

The works of Stanfield evidently, and at all times, proceed from the hand of a man who has both thorough knowledge of his subject, and thorough acquaintance with all the means and principles of art. We never criticise them, because we feel, the moment we look carefully at the drawing of any single wave, that the knowledge possessed by the master is much greater than our own, and therefore believe that if anything offends us in any part of the work, it is nearly certain to be our fault, and not the painter's. The local colour of Stanfield's sea is singularly true and powerful, and entirely independent of any tricks of chiaroscuro. He will carry a mighty wave up against the sky, and make its whole body dark and substantial against the distant light, using all the while nothing more than chaste and unexaggerated local colour to gain the relief. His surface is at once lustrous, transparent, and accurate to a hair's breadth in every curve; and he is entirely independent of dark skies, deep blues, driving spray, or any other means of concealing want of form, or atoning for it. He fears no difficulty, desires no assistance, takes his sea in open daylight, under general sunshine, and paints the *element* in its pure colour and complete forms. But we wish that he

were less powerful, and more interesting; or that he were a little less Diogenes-like, and did not scorn all that he does not want. Now that he has shown us what he can do without such aids, we wish he would show us what he can do with them. He is, as we have already said, wanting in what we have just been praising in Fielding—impressiveness. We should like him to be less clever, and more affecting—less wonderful, and more terrible; and as the very first step towards such an end, to learn how to conceal. We are, however, trenching upon matters with which we have at present nothing to do; our concern is now only with truth, and one work of Stanfield alone presents us with as much concentrated knowledge of sea and sky, as, diluted, would have lasted any one of the old masters his life. And let it be especially observed, how extensive and how various is the truth of our modern masters—how it comprises a complete history of that nature of which, from the ancients, you only here and there can catch a stammering descriptive syllable—how Fielding has given us every character of the quiet lake, Robson[1] of the mountain tarn, De Wint of the lowland river, Nesfield of the radiant cataract, Harding of the roaring torrent, Fielding of the desolate sea, Stanfield of the blue, open, boundless ocean. Arrange all this in your mind, observe the perfect truth of it in all its parts, compare it with the fragmentary falsities of the ancients, and then, come with me to Turner.

§ 12. But want of feeling. General sum of truth presented by modern art.

CHAPTER III

OF WATER, AS PAINTED BY TURNER

I BELIEVE it is a result of the experience of all artists, that it is the easiest thing in the world to give a certain degree of depth and transparency to water; but that it is

[1] I ought before to have alluded to the works of the late G. Robson. They are a little disagreeable in execution, but there is a feeling of the character of *deep* calm water in them quite unequalled, and different from the works and thoughts of all other men.

next thing to impossible, to give a full impression of surface. If no reflection be given—a ripple being supposed —the water looks like lead: if reflection be given, it in nine cases out of ten looks *morbidly* clear and deep, so that we always go down *into* it, even when the artist most wishes us to glide *over* it. Now, this difficulty arises from the very same circumstance which occasions the frequent failure in effect of the best drawn foregrounds, noticed in Section II. Chapter III., the change, namely, of focus necessary in the eye in order to receive rays of light coming from different distances. Go to the edge of a pond, in a perfectly calm day, at some place where there is duck-weed floating on the surface,—not thick, but a leaf here and there. Now, you may either see in the water the reflection of the sky, or you may see the duck-weed; but you cannot, by any effort, see both together. If you look for the reflection, you will be sensible of a sudden change or effort in the eye, by which it adapts itself to the reception of the rays which have come all the way from the clouds, have struck on the water, and so been sent up again to the eye. The focus you adopt is one fit for great distance; and, accordingly, you will feel that you are looking down a great way under the water, while the leaves of the duck-weed, though they lie upon the water at the very spot on which you are gazing so intently, are felt only as a vague, uncertain interruption, causing a little confusion in the image below, but entirely indistinguishable as leaves, —and even their colour unknown and unperceived. Unless you think of them, you will not even feel that anything interrupts your sight, so excessively slight is their effect. If, on the other hand, you make up your mind to look for the leaves of the duck-weed, you will perceive an instantaneous change in the effort of the eye, by which it becomes adapted to receive near rays—those which have only come from the surface of the pond. You will then see the delicate leaves of the duck-weed with perfect clearness, and in vivid green; but while you do so, you will be able to perceive nothing of the reflections in the very water on which they float—nothing but a vague flashing and melting of light and dark hues, without form or meaning, which, to

§ 1. The difficulty of giving surface to smooth water.

§ 2. Is dependent on the structure of the eye, and the focus by which the reflected rays are perceived.

investigate, or find out what they mean or are, you must quit your hold of the duck-weed, and plunge down.

Hence it appears, that whenever we see plain reflections of comparatively distant objects, in near water, we cannot possibly see the surface, and *vice versa;* so that when in a painting we give the reflections with the same clearness with which they are visible in nature, we pre-suppose the effort of the eye to look under the surface, and, of course, destroy the surface, and induce an effect of clearness which, perhaps, the artist has not particularly wished to attain, but which he has found himself forced into, by his reflections, in spite of himself. And the reason of this effect of clearness appearing preternatural is, that people are not in the habit of looking at water with the distant focus adapted to the reflections, unless by particular effort. We invariably, under ordinary circumstances, use the surface focus; and, in consequence, receive nothing more than a vague and confused impression of the reflected colours and lines, however clearly, calmly, and vigorously all may be defined underneath, if we choose to look for them. We do not look for them, but glide along over the surface, catching only playing light and capricious colour for evidence of reflection, except where we come to images of objects close to the surface, which the surface focus is of course adapted to receive; and these we see clearly, as of the weeds on the shore, or of sticks rising out of the water, etc. Hence, the ordinary effect of water is only to be rendered by giving the reflections of the *margin* clear and distinct (so clear they usually are in nature, that it is impossible to tell where the water begins); but the moment we touch the reflection of distant objects, as of high trees or clouds, that instant we must become vague and uncertain in drawing, and, though vivid in colour and light as the object itself, quite indistinct in form and feature. If we take such a piece of water as that in the foreground of Turner's Chateau of Prince Albert, the first impression from it is,—"What a wide *surface!*" We glide over it a quarter of a mile into the picture before we know where we are, and yet the water is as calm and crystalline as a mirror; but we are not allowed to tumble into it, and gasp for breath as we go down,—we are kept upon the surface, though that

§ 3. Morbid clearness occasioned in painting of water by distinctness of reflections.

§ 4. How avoided by Turner.

surface is flashing and radiant with every hue of cloud, and sun, and sky, and foliage. But the secret is in the drawing of these reflections.[1] We cannot tell when we look *at* them and *for* them, what they mean. They have all character, and are evidently reflections of something definite and determined; but yet they are all uncertain and inexplicable; playing colour and palpitating shade, which, though we recognize in an instant for images of something, and feel that the water is bright, and lovely, and calm, we cannot penetrate nor interpret: we are not allowed to go down to them, and we repose, as we should in nature, upon the lustre of the level surface. It is in this power of saying everything, and yet saying nothing too plainly, that the perfection of art here, as in all other cases, consists. But as it was before shown in Section II. Chapter III. that the focus of the eye required little alteration after the first half-mile of distance, it is evident that on the *distant* surface of water, *all* reflections will be seen plainly; for the same focus adapted to a moderate distance of surface will receive with distinctness rays coming from the sky, or from any other distance, however great. Thus we always see the reflection of Mont Blanc on the Lake of Geneva, whether we take pains to look for it or not, because the water upon which it is cast is itself a mile off; but if we would see the reflection of Mont Blanc in the Lac de Chede, which is close to us, we must take some trouble about the matter, leave the green snakes swimming upon the surface, and plunge for it. Hence reflections, if viewed collectively, are always clear in proportion to the distance of the water on which they are cast. And now look at Turner's Ulleswater, or any of his distant lake expanses, and you will find every crag and line

§ 5. All reflections on distant water are distinct.

[1] Not altogether. I believe here, as in a former case, I have attributed far too much influence to this change of focus. In Turner's earlier works the principle is not found. In the rivers of the Yorkshire drawings, every reflection is given clearly, even to the farthest depth, and yet the surface is not lost, and it would deprive the painter of much power if he were not sometimes so to represent them, especially when his object is repose; it being, of course, as lawful for him to choose one adaptation of the sight as another. I have, however, left the above paragraphs as first written, because they are true, although I think they make too much of an unimportant matter. The reader may attribute to them such weight as he thinks fit. He is referred to § 11 of this chapter, and to § 4 of the first Chapter of this Section.

of the hills rendered in them with absolute fidelity, while the near surface shows nothing but a vague confusion of exquisite and lustrous tint. The reflections even of the clouds will be given far off, while those of near boats and figures will be confused and mixed among each other, except just at the water-line.

§ 6. The error of Vandevelde.

And now we see what Vandevelde *ought* to have done with the shadow of his ship spoken of in the first chapter of this section. In such a calm, we should in nature, if we had looked for the reflection, have seen it clear from the water-line to the flag on the mainmast; but in so doing, we should have appeared to ourselves to be looking under the water, and should have lost all feeling of surface. When we looked at the surface of the sea,—as we naturally should,—we should have seen the image of the hull absolutely clear and perfect, because that image is cast on distant water; but we should have seen the image of the masts and sails gradually more confused as they descended, and the water close to us would have borne only upon its surface a maze of flashing colour and indefinite hue. Had Vandevelde, therefore, given the perfect image of his ship, he would have represented a truth dependent on a particular effort of the eye, and destroyed his surface. But his business was to give, not a distinct reflection, but the colours of the reflection in mystery and disorder upon his near water, all perfectly vivid, but none intelligible; and had he done so, the eye would not have troubled itself to search them out; it would not have cared whence or how the colours came, but it would have felt them to be true and right, and rested satisfied upon the polished surface of the clear sea. Of the perfect truth, the best examples I can give are Turner's Saltash, and Castle Upnor.

§ 7. Difference in arrangement of parts between the reflected object and its image.

Be it next observed, that the reflection of all near objects is, by our fifth rule, not an exact copy of the parts of them which we see above the water, but a totally different view and arrangement of them, that which we should get if we were looking at them from beneath. Hence we see the dark sides of leaves hanging over a stream, in their reflection, though we see the light sides above, and all objects and groups of objects are thus seen in the reflection under different lights, and in different positions

with respect to each other from those which they assume above; some which we see on the bank being entirely lost in their reflection, and others which we cannot see on the bank brought into view. Hence nature contrives never to repeat herself, and the surface of water is not a mockery, but a new view of what is above it. And this difference in what is represented, as well as the obscurity of the representation, is one of the chief sources by which the sensation of surface is kept up in the reality. The reflection is not so remarkable, it does not attract the eye in the same degree when it is entirely different from the images above, as when it mocks them and repeats them, and we feel that the space and surface have colour and character of their own, and that the bank is one thing and the water another. It is by not making this change manifest, and giving underneath a mere duplicate of what is seen above, that artists are apt to destroy the essence and substance of water, and to drop us through it.

§ 8. Illustrated from the works of Turner.

Now one instance will be sufficient to show the exquisite care of Turner in this respect. On the left-hand side of his Nottingham, the water (a smooth canal) is terminated by a bank fenced up with wood, on which, just at the edge of the water, stands a white sign-post. A quarter of a mile back, the hill on which Nottingham castle stands rises steeply nearly to the top of the picture. The upper part of this hill is in bright golden light, and the lower in very deep grey shadow, against which the white board of the sign-post is seen entirely in light relief, though, being turned from the light, it is itself in delicate middle tint, illumined only on the edge. But the image of all this in the canal is very different. First, we have the reflection of the piles of the bank, sharp and clear, but under this we have not what we see above it, the dark *base* of the hill (for this being a quarter of a mile back, we could not see over the fence if we were looking from below), but the golden summit of the hill, the shadow of the under part having no record nor place in the reflection. But this summit, being very distant, cannot be seen clearly by the eye while its focus is adapted to the surface of the water, and accordingly its reflection is entirely vague and confused; you cannot tell what it is meant for, it is mere playing golden light. But the sign-post, being on the bank close to us, will be reflected

clearly, and accordingly its distinct image is seen in the midst of this confusion. But it now is relieved, not against the dark base, but against the illumined summit of the hill, and it appears therefore, instead of a white space thrown out from blue shade, a dark grey space thrown out from golden light. I do not know that any more magnificent example could be given of concentrated knowledge, or of the daring statement of most difficult truth. For who but this consummate artist would have had courage, even if he had perceived the laws which required it, to undertake in a single small space of water, the painting of an entirely new picture, with all its tones and arrangements altered,—what was made above bright by opposition to blue, being underneath made cool and dark by opposition to gold;—or would have dared to contradict so boldly the ordinary expectation of the uncultivated eye, to find in the reflection a mockery of the reality? But the reward is immediate, for not only is the change most grateful to the eye, and most exquisite as composition, but the surface of the water in consequence of it is felt to be as spacious as it is clear, and the eye rests not on the inverted image of the material objects, but on the element which receives them. And we have a farther instance in this passage of the close study which is required to enjoy the works of Turner, for another artist might have altered the reflection or confused it, but he would not have reasoned upon it so as to find out *what the exact alteration must be;* and if we had tried to account for the reflection, we should have found it false or inaccurate. But the master-mind of Turner, without effort, showers its knowledge into every touch, and we have only to trace out even his slightest passages, part by part, to find in them the universal working of the deepest thought, that consistency of every minor truth which admits of and invites the same ceaseless study as the work of nature herself.

§ 9. The boldness and judgment shown in the observance of it.

There is, however, yet another peculiarity in Turner's painting of smooth water, which, though less deserving of admiration, as being merely a mechanical excellence, is not less wonderful than its other qualities, nor less unique—a peculiar texture, namely, given to the most delicate tints of the surface, when there is little reflection from anything except sky or

§ 10. The *texture* of surface in Turner's painting of calm water.

atmosphere, and which, just at the points where other painters are reduced to paper, gives to the surface of Turner the greatest appearance of substantial liquidity. It is impossible to say how it is produced; it looks like some modification of body colour; but it certainly is not body colour used as by other men, for I have seen this expedient tried over and over again without success; and it is often accompanied by crumbling touches of a dry brush, which never could have been put upon body colour, and which could not have shown through underneath it. As a piece of mechanical excellence it is one of the most remarkable things in the works of the master; and it brings the truth of his water-painting up to the last degree of perfection, often rendering those passages of it the most attractive and delightful, which, from their delicacy and paleness of tint, would have been weak and papery in the hands of any other man. The best instance of it I can give is, I think, the distance of the Devonport with the Dockyards.

§ 11. Its united qualities.

After all, however, there is more in Turner's painting of water surface than any philosophy of reflection, or any peculiarity of means, can account for or accomplish; there is a might and wonder about it which will not admit of our whys or hows. Take, for instance, the picture of the Sun of Venice going to Sea, of 1843, respecting which, however, there are one or two circumstances which may as well be noted besides its water-painting. The reader, if he has not been at Venice, ought to be made aware that the Venetian fishing-boats, almost without exception, carry canvass painted with bright colours, the favourite design for the centre being either a cross or a large sun with many rays, the favourite colours being red, orange, and black, blue occurring occasionally. The radiance of these sails and of the bright and grotesque vanes at the mast-heads under sunlight is beyond all painting, but it is strange that, of constant occurrence as these boats are on all the lagoons, Turner alone should have availed himself of them. Nothing could be more faithful than the boat which was the principal object in this picture, in the cut of the sail, the filling of it, the exact height of the boom above the deck, the quartering of it with colour, finally and especially, the hanging of the fish-baskets about the bows. All these, however, are comparatively minor merits (though not the blaze of colour

which the artist elicited from the right use of these circumstances,) but the peculiar power of the picture was the painting of the sea surface, where there were no reflections to assist it. A stream of splendid colour fell from the boat, but that occupied the centre only; in the distance the city and crowded boats threw down some playing lines, but these still left on each side of the boat a large space of water reflecting nothing but the morning sky. This was divided by an eddying swell, on whose continuous sides the local colour of the water was seen, pure aqua-marine, (a beautiful occurrence of closely-observed truth,) but still there remained a large blank space of pale water to be treated, the sky above had no distinct details, and was pure faint grey, with broken white vestiges of cloud: it gave no help therefore. But there the water lay, no dead grey flat paint, but downright clear, playing, palpable surface, full of indefinite hue, and retiring as regularly and visibly back and far away, as if there had been objects all over it to tell the story by perspective. Now it is the doing of this which tries the painter, and it is his having done this which made me say above that "no man had ever painted the surface of calm water but Turner." The San Benedetto, looking towards Fusina, contained a similar passage, equally fine; in one of the Canale della Guidecca the specific green colour of the water is seen in front, with the shadows of the boats thrown on it in purple; all, as it retires, passing into the pure reflective blue.

§ 12. Relation of various circumstances of past agitation, &c., by the most trifling incidents, as in the Cowes.

But Turner is not satisfied with this. He is never altogether content unless he can, at the same time that he takes advantage of all the placidity of repose, tell us something either about the past commotion of the water, or of some present stirring of tide or current which its stillness does not show, or give us something or other to think about and reason upon, as well as to look at. Take a few instances. His Cowes, Isle of Wight, is a summer twilight about half an hour, or more, after sunset. Intensity of repose is the great aim throughout, and the unity of tone of the picture is one of the finest things that Turner has ever done. But there is not only quietness, there is the very deepest solemnity in the whole of the light, as well as in the stillness of the

vessels; and Turner wishes to enhance this feeling by representing not only repose, but *power* in repose, the emblem, in the sea, of the quiet ships of war. Accordingly, he takes the greatest possible pains to get his surface polished, calm, and smooth, but he indicates the reflection of a buoy floating a full quarter of a mile off by three black strokes with wide intervals between them, the last of which touches the water within twenty yards of the spectator. Now these three reflections can only indicate the farther sides of three rises of an enormous swell, and give by their intervals of separation, a space of from twelve to twenty yards for the breadth of each wave, including the sweep between them, and this swell is farther indicated by the reflection of the new moon falling in a wide zigzag line. The exceeding majesty which this single circumstance gives to the whole picture, the sublime sensation of power and knowledge of former exertion which we instantly receive from it, if we have but acquaintance with nature enough to understand its language, render this work not only a piece of the most refined truth, (as which I have at present named it) but to my mind, one of the highest pieces of intellectual art existing.

§ 13. In scenes on the Loire and Seine.

Again, in the scene on the Loire, with the square precipice and fiery sunset, in the Rivers of France, repose has been aimed at in the same way, and most thoroughly given; but the immense width of the river at this spot makes it look like a lake or sea, and it was therefore necessary that we should be made thoroughly to understand and feel that this is not the calm of still water, but the tranquillity of a majestic current. Accordingly, a boat swings at anchor on the right; and the stream, dividing at its bow, flows towards us in two long, dark waves, especial attention to which is enforced by the one on the left being brought across the reflected stream of sunshine, which it separates, and which is broken in the nearer water by the general undulation and agitation caused by the boat's wake; a wake caused by the water's passing it, not by *its* going through the water.

Again, in the Confluence of the Seine and Marne, we have the repose of the wide river stirred by the paddles of the steamboat (whose plashing we can almost hear, for we are especially compelled to look at them by their being

made the central note of the composition—the blackest object in it, opposed to the strongest light), and this disturbance is not merely caused by the two lines of surge from the boat's wake, for any other painter must have given these, but Turner never rests satisfied till he has told you *all* in his power; and he has not only given the receding surges, but these have gone on to the shore, have struck upon it, and been beaten back from it in another line of weaker contrary surges, whose point of intersection with those of the wake itself is marked by the sudden sub-division and disorder of the waves of the wake on the extreme left, and whose reverted direction is exquisitely given where their lines cross the calm water, close to the spectator, and marked also by the sudden vertical spring of the spray just where they intersect the swell from the boat; and in order that we may fully be able to account for these reverted waves, we are allowed, just at the extreme right-hand limit of the picture, to see the point where the swell from the boat meets the shore. In the Chaise de Gargantua we have the still water lulled by the dead calm which usually precedes the most violent storms, suddenly broken upon by a tremendous burst of wind from the gathered thunder-clouds, scattering the boats, and razing the water into rage, except where it is sheltered by the hills. In the Jumieges and Vernon we have farther instances of local agitation, caused, in the one instance, by a steamer, in the other, by the large water-wheels under the bridge, not, observe, a mere splashing about the wheel itself, this is too far off to be noticeable, so that we should not have even known that the objects beneath the bridge were water-wheels, but for the agitation recorded a quarter of a mile down the river, where its current crosses the sunlight. And thus there will scarcely ever be found a piece of quiet water by Turner, without some story in it of one kind or another; sometimes a slight, but beautiful incident—oftener, as in the Cowes, something on which the whole sentiment and intention of the picture in a great degree depends; but invariably presenting some new instance of varied knowledge and observation, some fresh appeal to the highest faculties of the mind.

§ 14. Expression of contrary waves caused by recoil from shore.

§. 15. Various other instances.

Of extended surfaces of water, as rendered by Turner, the Loch Katrine and Derwent-water, of the Illustrations to Scott, and the Loch Lomond, vignette in Rogers's Poems, are characteristic instances. The first of these gives us the most distant part of the lake entirely under the influence of a light breeze, and therefore entirely without reflections of the objects on its borders; but the whole near half is untouched by the wind, and on that is cast the image of the upper part of Ben-Venue and of the islands. The second gives us the surface, with just so much motion upon it as to prolong, but not to destroy, the reflections of the dark woods,—reflections only interrupted by the ripple of the boat's wake. And the third gives us an example of the whole surface so much affected by ripple as to bring into exercise all those laws which we have seen so grossly violated by Canaletto. We see in the nearest boat that though the lines of the gunwale are much blacker and more conspicuous than that of the cutwater, yet the gunwale lines, being nearly horizontal, have no reflection whatsoever; while the line of the cutwater, being vertical, has a distinct reflection of three times its own length. But even these tremulous reflections are only visible as far as the islands; beyond them, as the lake retires into distance, we find it receives only the reflection of the grey light from the clouds, and runs in one flat white field up between the hills; and besides all this, we have another phenomenon, quite new, given to us,—the brilliant gleam of light along the centre of the lake. This is not caused by ripple, for it is cast on a surface rippled all over; but it is what we could not have without ripple,—the light of a passage of sunshine. I have already (Chap. I., § 9) explained the cause of this phenomenon, which never can by any possibility take place on calm water, being the multitudinous reflection of the sun from the sides of the ripples, causing an appearance of local light and shadow; and being dependent, like real light and shadow, on the passage of the clouds, though the dark parts of the water are the reflections of the clouds, not the shadows of them; and the bright parts are the reflections of the sun, and not the light of it. This little vignette, then, will entirely

§ 16. Turner's painting of distant expanses of water. Calm, interrupted by ripple.

§ 17. And rippled, crossed by sunshine.

complete the system of Turner's universal truth in quiet water. We have seen every phenomenon given by him,—the clear reflection, the prolonged reflection, the reflection broken by ripple, and finally the ripple broken by light and shade; and it is especially to be observed how careful he is, in this last case, when he uses the apparent light and shade, to account for it by showing us in the whiteness of the lake beyond, its universal subjection to ripple.

§ 18. His drawing of distant rivers.

We have not spoken of Turner's magnificent drawing of distant rivers, which, however, is dependent only on more complicated application of the same laws, with exquisite perspective. The sweeps of river in the Dryburgh, (Illustrations to Scott,) and Melrose, are bold and characteristic examples, as well as the Rouen from St. Catherine's Hill, and the Caudebec, in the Rivers of France. The only thing which in these works requires particular attention, is the care with which the height of the observer above the river is indicated by the loss of the reflections of its banks. This is, perhaps, shown most clearly in the Caudebec. If we had been on a level with the river, its whole surface would have been darkened by the reflection of the steep and high banks; but being far above it, we can see no more of the image than we could of the hill itself, if it were actually reversed under the water; and therefore we see that Turner gives us only a narrow line of dark water, immediately under the precipice, the broad surface reflecting only the sky. This is also finely shown on the left-hand side of the Dryburgh.

§ 19. And of surface associated with mist.

But all these early works of the artist have been eclipsed by some recent drawings of Switzerland. These latter are not to be described by any words, but they must be noted here not only as presenting records of lake effect on grander scale, and of more imaginative character than any other of his works, but as combining effects of the surface of mist with the surface of water. Two or three of the Lake of Lucerne, seen from above, give the melting of the mountain promontories beneath into the clear depth, and above into the clouds; one of Constance shows the vast lake at evening, seen not as water, but its surface covered with low white mist, lying league beyond league in the twilight like a fallen space of moony cloud; one of Goldau shows the Lake of

Zug appearing through the chasm of a thunder-cloud under sunset, its whole surface one blaze of fire, and the promontories of the hills thrown out against it like spectres; another of Zurich gives the playing of the green waves of the river among white streams of moonlight: two purple sunsets on the Lake of Zug are distinguished for the glow obtained without positive colour, the rose and purple tints being in great measure brought by opposition out of browns: finally, a drawing executed in 1845 of the town of Lucerne from the lake is unique for its expression of water surface reflecting the clear green hue of sky at twilight.

§ 20. His drawing of falling water, with peculiar expression of weight.

It will be remembered that it was said above, that Turner was the only painter who had ever represented the surface of calm or the *force* of agitated water. He obtains this expression of force in falling or running water by fearless and full rendering of its forms. He never loses himself and his subject in the splash of the fall—his presence of mind never fails as he goes down; he does not blind us with the spray, or veil the countenance of his fall with its own drapery. A little crumbling white, or lightly rubbed paper, will soon give the effect of indiscriminate foam; but nature gives more than foam—she shows beneath it, and through it, a peculiar character of exquisitely studied form bestowed on every wave and line of fall; and it is this variety of definite character which Turner always aims at, rejecting, as much as possible, everything that conceals or overwhelms it. Thus, in the Upper Fall of the Tees, though the whole basin of the fall is blue and dim with the rising vapour, yet the whole attention of the spectator is directed to that which it was peculiarly difficult to render, the concentric zones and delicate curves of the falling water itself; and it is impossible to express with what exquisite accuracy these are given. They are the characteristic of a powerful stream descending without impediment or break, but from a narrow channel, so as to expand as it falls. They are the constant form which such a stream assumes as it descends; and yet I think it would be difficult to point to another instance of their being rendered in art. You will find nothing in the waterfalls even of our best painters, but springing lines of parabolic descent, and splashing, shapeless foam; and, in consequence, though they make you understand

the swiftness of the water, they never let you feel the weight of it; the stream in their hands looks *active*, not *supine*, as if it leaped, not as if it fell. Now water will leap a little way, it will leap down a weir or over a stone, but it *tumbles* over a high fall like this; and it is when we have lost the parabolic line, and arrived at the catenary,—when we have lost the *spring* of the fall, and arrived at the *plunge* of it, that we begin really to feel its weight and wildness. Where water takes its first leap from the top, it is cool, and collected, and uninteresting, and mathematical, but it is when it finds that it has got into a scrape, and has farther to go than it thought for, that its character comes out; it is then that it begins to writhe, and twist, and sweep out zone after zone in wilder stretching as it falls, and to send down the rocket-like, lance-pointed, whizzing shafts at its sides, sounding for the bottom. And it is this prostration, this hopeless abandonment of its ponderous power to the air, which is always peculiarly expressed by Turner, and especially in the case before us; while our other artists, keeping to the parabolic line, where they do not lose themselves in smoke and foam, make their cataract look muscular and wiry, and may consider themselves fortunate if they can keep it from stopping. I believe the majesty of motion which Turner has given by these concentric catenary lines must be felt even by those who have never seen a high waterfall, and therefore cannot appreciate their exquisite fidelity to nature.

§ 21. The abandonment and plunge of great cataracts. How given by him.

In the Chain Bridge over the Tees, this passiveness and swinging of the water to and fro are yet more remarkable; while we have another characteristic of a great waterfall given to us, that the wind, in this instance coming up the valley against the current, takes the spray up off the edges, and carries it back in little torn, reverted rags and threads, seen in delicate form against the darkness on the left. But we must understand a little more about the nature of running water before we can appreciate the drawing either of this, or any other of Turner's torrents.

When water, not in very great body, runs in a rocky bed much interrupted by hollows, so that it can rest every now and then in a pool as it goes along, it does not acquire a continuous velocity of motion. It pauses after every leap,

and curdles about, and rests a little, and then goes on again; and if in this comparatively tranquil and rational state of mind it meets with any obstacle, as a rock or stone, it parts on each side of it with a little bubbling foam, and goes round; if it comes to a step in its bed, it leaps it lightly, and then after a little plashing at the bottom, stops again to take breath. But if its bed be on a continuous slope, not much interrupted by hollows, so that it cannot rest, or if its own mass be so increased by flood that its usual resting-places are not sufficient for it, but that it is perpetually pushed out of them by the following current, before it has had time to tranquillize itself, it of course gains velocity with every yard that it runs; the impetus got at one leap is carried to the credit of the next, until the whole stream becomes one mass of unchecked, accelerating motion. Now when water in this state comes to an obstacle, it does not part at it, but clears it, like a race-horse; and when it comes to a hollow, it does not fill it up and run out leisurely at the other side, but it rushes down into it and comes up again on the other side, as a ship into the hollow of the sea. Hence the whole appearance of the bed of the stream is changed, and all the lines of the water altered in their nature. The quiet stream is a succession of leaps and pools; the leaps are light and springy, and parabolic, and make a great deal of splashing when they tumble into the pool; then we have a space of quiet curdling water, and another similar leap below. But the stream when it has gained an impetus takes the shape of its bed, never stops, is equally deep and equally swift everywhere, goes down into every hollow, not with a leap, but with a swing, not foaming, nor splashing, but in the bending line of a strong sea-wave, and comes up again on the other side, over rock and ridge, with the ease of a bounding leopard; if it meet a rock three or four feet above the level of its bed, it will neither part nor foam, nor express any concern about the matter, but clear it in a smooth dome of water, without apparent exertion, coming down again as smoothly on the other side; the whole surface of the surge being drawn into parallel lines by its extreme velocity, but

§ 22. Difference in the action of water, when continuous and when interrupted. The interrupted stream fills the hollows of its bed.

§ 23. But the continuous stream takes the shape of its bed.

foamless, except in places where the form of the bed opposes itself at some direct angle to such a line of fall, and causes a breaker; so that the whole river has the appearance of a deep and raging sea, with this only difference, that the torrent-waves always break backwards, and sea-waves forwards. Thus, then, in the water which has gained an impetus, we have the most exquisite arrangements of curved lines, perpetually changing from convex to concave, and *vice versa*, following every swell and hollow of the bed with their modulating grace, and all in unison of motion, presenting perhaps the most beautiful series of inorganic forms which nature can possibly produce; for the sea runs too much into similar and concave curves with sharp edges, but every motion of the torrent is united, and all its curves are modifications of beautiful line.

§ 24. Its exquisite curved lines.

We see, therefore, why Turner seizes on these curved lines of the torrent, not only as being among the most beautiful forms of nature, but because they are an instant expression of the utmost power and velocity, and tell us how the torrent has been flowing before we see it. For the leap and splash might be seen in the sudden freakishness of a quiet stream, or the fall of a rivulet over a mill-dam; but the undulating line is the *exclusive* attribute of the mountain torrent,[1] whose fall and fury have made the valleys

§ 25. Turner's careful choice of the historical truth.

[1] On a large scale it is so, but the same lines are to be seen for the moment whenever water becomes exceedingly rapid, and yet feels the bottom as it passes, being not thrown up or cast clear of it. In general, the drawing of water fails from being too interrupted, the forms flung hither and thither, and broken up and covered with bright touches, instead of being wrought out in their real unities of curvature. It is difficult enough to draw a curved surface, even when it is rough and has texture; but to indicate the varied and sweeping forms of a crystalline and polished substance, requires far more skill and patience than most artists possess. In some respects, it is impossible. I do not suppose any means of art are capable of rightly expressing the smooth, multitudinous rippling of a rapid rivulet of shallow water, giving its transparency lustre and fully-developed forms; and the greater number of the lines and actions of torrent-waves are equally inexpressible. The effort should, nevertheless, always be made, and whatever is sacrificed in colour, freedom, or brightness, the real contours ought always in some measure to be drawn, as a careful draughtsman secures those of flesh, or any other finely-modelled surface. It is better, in many respects, the drawing should miss of being *like* water, than that it should

echo for miles; and thus the moment we see one of its curves over a stone in the foreground, we know how far it has come, and how fiercely. And in the drawing we have been speaking of, the lower fall of the Tees, in the foreground of the Killiecrankie and Rhymer's Glen, and of the St. Maurice, in Rogers's Italy, we shall find the most exquisite instances of the use of such lines; but the most perfect of all in the Llanthony Abbey, which may be considered as the standard of torrent-drawing. The chief light of the picture here falls upon the surface of the stream, swelled by recent rain, and its mighty waves come rolling down close to the spectator, green and clear, but pale with anger, in gigantic, unbroken, oceanic curves, bending into each other without break or foam, though jets of fiery spray are cast into the air along the rocky shore, and rise in the sunshine in dusty vapour. The whole surface is one united race of mad motion; all the waves dragged, as I have described, into lines and furrows by their swiftness, and every one of these fine forms is drawn with the most studied chiaroscuro of delicate colour, greys and greens, as silvery and pure as the finest passages of Paul Veronese, and with a refinement of execution which the eye strains itself in looking into. The rapidity and gigantic force of this torrent, the exquisite refinement of its colour, and the vividness of foam which is obtained through a general middle tint, render it about the most perfect piece of painting of running water in existence.

§ 26. His exquisite drawing of the continuous torrent in the Llanthony Abbey.

Now this picture is, as was noticed in our former reference to it, full of expression of every kind of motion: the clouds are in wild haste; the sun is gleaming fast and fitfully through the leaves; the rain drifting away along the hill-side; and the torrent, the principal object, to complete the impression, is made the wildest thing of all, and not only wild before us, and with us, but bearing with it in its every motion, from its long course, the record of its rage. Observe how differently Turner uses his torrent when the spirit of the picture is repose. In the Mercury and Argus

§ 27. And of the interrupted torrent in the Mercury and Argus.

miss in this one respect the grandeur of water. Many tricks of scratching and dashing will bring out a deceptive resemblance; the determined and laborious rendering of contour alone secures sublimity.

we have also a stream in the foreground; but, in coming down to us, we see it stopping twice in two quiet and glassy pools, upon which the drinking cattle cast an unstirred image. From the nearest of these, the water leaps in three cascades into another basin close to us; it trickles in silver threads through the leaves at its edge, and falls tinkling and splashing (though in considerable body) into the pool, stirring its quiet surface, at which a bird is stooping to drink, with concentric and curdling ripples, which divide round the stone at its farthest border, and descend in sparkling foam over the lip of the basin. Thus we find, in every case, the system of Turner's truth entirely unbroken, each phase and phenomenon of nature being recorded exactly where it is most valuable and impressive.

We have not, however, space to follow out the variety of his torrent-drawing. The above two examples are characteristic of the two great divisions or classes of torrents—that whose motion is continuous, and whose motion is interrupted: all drawing of running water will resolve itself into the representation of one or other of these. The descent of the distant stream in the vignette to the Boy of Egremond is slight, but very striking; and the Junction of the Greta and Tees, a singular instance of the bold drawing of the complicated forms of a shallow stream among multitudinous rocks. A still finer example occurs in a recent drawing of Dazio Grande, on the St. Gothard, the waves of the Toccia, clear and blue, fretting among the granite debris which were brought down by the storm that destroyed the whole road. In the Ivy bridge the subject is the rest of the torrent in a pool among fallen rocks, the forms of the stones are seen through the clear brown water, and their reflections mingle with those of the foliage.

§ 28. Various cases.

More determined efforts have at all periods been made in sea-painting than in torrent-painting, yet less successful. As above stated, it is easy to obtain a resemblance of broken running water by tricks and dexterities, but the sea *must* be legitimately drawn; it cannot be given as utterly disorganized and confused, its weight and mass must be expressed, and the efforts at expression of it end in failure with all but the most powerful men; even with these few a

§ 29. Sea-painting. Impossibility of truly representing foam.

partial success must be considered worthy of the highest praise.

As the right rendering of the Alps depends on power of drawing snow, so the right painting of the sea must depend, at least in all coast scenery, in no small measure on the power of drawing foam. Yet there are two conditions of foam of invariable occurrence on breaking waves, of which I have never seen the slightest record attempted; first the thick creamy curdling overlapping massy form which remains for a moment only after the fall of the wave, and is seen in perfection in its running up the beach; and secondly, the thin white coating into which this subsides, which opens into oval gaps and clefts, marbling the waves over their whole surface, and connecting the breakers on a flat shore by long dragging streams of white.

It is evident that the difficulty of expressing either of these two conditions must be immense. The lapping and curdling form is difficult enough to catch even when the lines of its undulation alone are considered; but the lips, so to speak, which lie along these lines, are full, projecting, and marked by beautiful light and shade; each has its high light, a gradation into shadow of indescribable delicacy, a bright reflected light, and a dark cast shadow; to draw all this requires labour, and care, and firmness of work, which, as I imagine, must always, however skilfully bestowed, destroy all impression of wildness, accidentalism, and evanescence, and so kill the sea. Again, the openings in the thin subsided foam in their irregular modifications of circular and oval shapes dragged hither and thither, would be hard enough to draw even if they could be seen on a flat surface; instead of which, every one of the openings is seen in undulation on a tossing surface, broken up over small surges and ripples, and so thrown into perspectives of the most hopeless intricacy. Now it is not easy to express the lie of a pattern with oval openings on the folds of drapery. I do not know that any one under the mark of Veronese or Titian could even do this as it ought to be done, yet in drapery much stiffness and error may be overlooked; not so in sea,—the slightest inaccuracy, the slightest want of flow and freedom in the line, is attached by the eye in a moment of high treason, and I believe success to be impossible.

Yet there is not a wave or any violently agitated sea on

which both these forms do not appear, the latter especially, after some time of storm, extends over their whole surfaces; the reader sees, therefore, why I said that sea could only be painted by means of more or less dexterous conventionalisms, since two of its most enduring phenomena cannot be represented at all.

§ 30. Character of shore-breakers, also inexpressible.

Again, as respects the form of breakers on an even shore there is difficulty of no less formidable kind. There is in them an irreconcilable mixture of fury and formalism. Their hollow surface is marked by parallel lines, like those of a smooth mill-weir, and graduated by reflected and transmitted lights of the most wonderful intricacy, its curve being at the same time necessarily of mathematical purity and precision; yet at the top of this curve, when it nods over, there is a sudden laxity and giving way, the water swings and jumps along the ridge like a shaken chain, and the motion runs from part to part as it does through a serpent's body. Then the wind is at work on the extreme edge, and instead of letting it fling itself off naturally, it supports it, and drives it back, or scrapes it off, and carries it bodily away; so that the spray at the top is in a continual transition between forms projected by their own weight, and forms blown and carried off with their weight overcome; then at last, when it has come down, who shall say what shape that may be called, which shape has none of the great crash where it touches the beach.

I think it is that last crash which is the great taskmaster. Nobody can do anything with it. I have seen Copley Fielding come very close to the jerk and nod of the lifted threatening edge, curl it very successfully, and without any look of its having been in papers, down nearly to the beach, but the final fall has no thunder in it. Turner has tried hard for it once or twice, but it will not do. The moment is given in the Sidon of the Bible Illustrations, and more elaborately in a painting of Bamborough; in both these cases there is little foam at the bottom, and the fallen breaker looks like a wall, yet grand always; and in the latter picture very beautifully assisted in expression by the tossing of a piece of cable, which some figures are dragging ashore, and which the breaker flings into the air as it falls. Perhaps the most successful rendering of the forms was in the Hero and Leander, but there the drawing was rendered

easier by the powerful effect of light which disguised the foam.

§ 31. Their effect how injured when seen from the shore.

It is not, however, from the shore that Turner usually studies his sea. Seen from the land, the curl of the breakers, even in nature, is somewhat uniform and monotonous; the size of the waves out at sea is uncomprehended, and those nearer the eye seem to succeed and resemble each other, to move slowly to the beach, and to break in the same lines and forms.

Afloat even twenty yards from the shore, we receive a totally different impression. Every wave around us appears vast—every one different from all the rest—and the breakers present, now that we see them with their backs towards us, the grand, extended, and varied lines of long curvature, which are peculiarly expressive both of velocity and power. Recklessness, before unfelt, is manifested in the mad, perpetual, changeful, undirected motion, not of wave after wave, as it appears from the shore, but of the very same water rising and falling. Of waves that successively approach and break, each appears to the mind a separate individual, whose part being performed, it perishes, and is succeeded by another; and there is nothing in this to impress us with the idea of restlessness, any more than in any successive and continuous functions of life and death. But it is when we perceive that it is no succession of wave, but the same water constantly rising, and crashing, and recoiling, and rolling in again in new forms and with fresh fury, that we perceive the perturbed spirit, and feel the intensity of its unwearied rage. The sensation of power is also trebled; for not only is the vastness of apparent size much increased, but the whole action is different; it is not a passive wave, rolling sleepily forward until it tumbles heavily, prostrated upon the beach, but a sweeping exertion of tremendous and living strength, which does not now appear to *fall*, but to *burst* upon the shore; which never perishes, but recoils and recovers.

§ 32. Turner's expression of heavy rolling sea.

Aiming at these grand characters of the Sea, Turner almost always places the spectator, not on the shore, but twenty or thirty yards from it, beyond the first range of the breakers, as in the Land's End, Fowey, Dunbar, and Laugharne. The latter has been well engraved, and may be taken as a

standard of the expression of fitfulness and power. The grand division of the whole space of the sea by a few dark continuous furrows of tremendous swell (the breaking of one of which alone has strewed the rocks in front with ruin), furnishes us with an estimate of space and strength, which at once reduces the men upon the shore to insects; and yet through this terrific simplicity there is indicated a fitfulness and fury in the tossing of the individual lines, which give to the whole sea a wild, unwearied, reckless incoherency, like that of an enraged multitude, whose masses act together in phrenzy, while not one individual feels as another. Especial attention is to be directed to the flatness of all the lines, for the same principle holds in sea which we have seen in mountains. All the size and sublimity of nature are given not by the height, but by the breadth of her masses: and Turner, by following her in her sweeping lines, while he does not lose the elevation of its surges, adds in a tenfold degree to their power: farther, observe the peculiar expression of *weight* which there is in Turner's waves, precisely of the same kind which we saw in his water-fall. We have not a cutting, springing, elastic line—no jumping or leaping in the waves: *that* is the characteristic of Chelsea Reach or Hampstead Ponds in a storm. But the surges roll and plunge with such prostration and hurling of their mass against the shore, that we feel the rocks are shaking under them; and, to add yet more to this impression, observe how little, comparatively, they are broken by the wind; above the floating wood, and along the shore, we have indication of a line of torn spray; but it is a mere fringe along the ridge of the surge—no interference with its gigantic body. The wind has no power over its tremendous unity of force and weight. Finally, observe how, on the rocks on the left, the violence and swiftness of the rising wave are indicated by precisely the same lines which we saw were indicative of fury in the torrent. The water on these rocks is the body of the wave which has just broken, rushing up over them; and in doing so, like the torrent, it does not break, nor foam, nor part upon the rock, but accommodates itself to every one of its swells and hollows, with undulating lines, whose grace and variety might alone serve us for a day's study; and it is only where two streams

§ 33. With peculiar expression of weight.

of this rushing water meet in the hollow of the rock, that their force is shown by the vertical bound of the spray.

In the distance of this grand picture, there are two waves which entirely depart from the principle observed by all the rest, and spring high into the air. They have a message for us which it is important that we should understand. Their leap is not a preparation for breaking, neither is it caused by their meeting with a rock. It is caused by their encounter with the recoil of the preceding wave. When a large surge, in the act of breaking, just as it curls over, is hurled against the face either of a wall or of a vertical rock, the sound of the blow is not a crash, nor a roar; it is a report as loud as, and in every respect similar to, that of a great gun, and the wave is dashed back from the rock with force scarcely diminished, but reversed in direction,—it now recedes from the shore, and at the instant that it encounters the following breaker, the result is the vertical bound of both which is here rendered by Turner. Such a recoiling wave will proceed out to sea through ten or twelve ranges of following breakers, before it is overpowered. The effect of the encounter is more completely and palpably given in the Quillebœuf, in the Rivers of France. It is peculiarly instructive here, as informing us of the nature of the coast, and the force of the waves, far more clearly than any spray about the rocks themselves could have done. But the effect of the blow at the shore itself is given in the Land's End, and vignette to Lycidas. Under favourable circumstances, with an advancing tide under a heavy gale, where the breakers feel the shore underneath them a moment before they touch the rock, so as to nod over when they strike, the effect is nearly incredible except to an eye-witness. I have seen the whole body of the wave rise in one white, vertical, broad fountain, eighty feet above the sea, half of it beaten so fine as to be borne away by the wind, the rest turning in the air when exhausted, and falling back with a weight and crash like that of an enormous waterfall. This is given most completely in the Lycidas, and the blow of a less violent wave among broken rocks, not meeting it with an absolute wall, along the shore of the Land's End. This last picture is a study of sea whose whole organization

§ 34. Peculiar action of recoiling waves.

§ 35. And of the stroke of a breaker on the shore.

has been broken up by constant recoils from a rocky coast. The Laugharne gives the surge and weight of the ocean in a gale, on a comparatively level shore; but the Land's End, the entire disorder of the surges when every one of them, divided and entangled among promontories as it rolls in, and beaten back part by part from walls of rock on this side and that side, recoils like the defeated division of a great army, throwing all behind it into disorder, breaking up the succeeding waves into vertical ridges, which in their turn, yet more totally shattered upon the shore, retire in more hopeless confusion, until the whole surface of the sea becomes one dizzy whirl of rushing, writhing, tortured, undirected rage, bounding, and crashing, and coiling in an anarchy of enormous power, subdivided into myriads of waves, of which every one is not, be it remembered, a separate surge, but part and portion of a vast one, actuated by internal power, and giving in every direction the mighty undulation of impetuous line which glides over the rocks and writhes in the wind, overwhelming the one, and piercing the other with the form, fury, and swiftness of a sheet of lambent fire. And throughout the rendering of all this, there is not one false curve given, not one which is not the perfect expression of visible motion; and the forms of the infinite sea are drawn throughout with that utmost mastery of art which, through the deepest study of every line, makes every line appear the wildest child of chance, while yet each is in itself a subject and a picture different from all else around. Of the colour of this magnificent sea I have before spoken; it is a solemn green grey, (with its foam seen dimly through the darkness of twilight), modulated with the fulness, changefulness, and sadness of a deep, wild melody.

§ 36. General character of sea on a rocky coast given by Turner in the Land's End.

The greater number of Turner's paintings of open sea belong to a somewhat earlier period than these drawings; nor, generally speaking, are they of equal value. It appears to me that the artist had at that time either less knowledge of, or less delight in, the characteristics of deep water than of coast sea, and that, in consequence, he suffered himself to be influenced by some of the qualities of the Dutch sea-painters. In particular, he borrowed from them the habit

§ 37. Open seas of Turner's earlier time.

of casting a dark shadow on the near waves, so as to bring out a stream of light behind; and though he did this in a more legitimate way than they, that is to say, expressing the light by touches on the foam, and indicating the shadow as cast on foamy surface, still the habit has induced much feebleness and conventionality in the pictures of the period. His drawing of the waves was also somewhat petty and divided, small forms covered with white flat spray, a condition which I doubt not the artist has seen on some of the shallow Dutch seas, but which I have never met with myself, and of the rendering of which therefore I cannot speak. Yet even in these, which I think among the poorest works of the painter, the expressions of breeze, motion, and light, are very marvellous; and it is instructive to compare them either with the lifeless works of the Dutch themselves, or with any modern imitations of them, as for instance with the seas of Callcott, where all the light is white, and all the shadows grey, where no distinction is made between water and foam, or between real and reflective shadow, and which are generally without evidence of the artist's having ever seen the sea.

Some pictures, however, belonging to this period of Turner are free from the Dutch infection, and show the real power of the artist. A very important one is in the possession of Lord Francis Egerton, somewhat heavy in its forms, but remarkable for the grandeur of distance obtained at the horizon; a much smaller, but more powerful example is the Port Rysdael in the possession of E. Bicknell, Esq., with which I know of no work at all comparable for the expression of the white, wild, cold, comfortless waves of northern sea, even though the sea is almost subordinate to the awful rolling clouds. Both these pictures are very grey. The Pas de Calais has more colour, and shows more art than either, yet is less impressive. Recently, two marines of the same subdued colour have appeared (1843) among his more radiant works. One, Ostend, somewhat forced and affected, but the other, also called Port Rysdael, is among the most perfect sea pictures he has produced, and especially remarkable as being painted without one marked opposition either of colour or of shade, all quiet and simple even to an extreme, so that the picture was exceedingly unattractive at first sight. The shadow of the pier-head on the near waves is marked solely by touches

indicative of reflected light, and so mysteriously that when the picture is seen near, it is quite untraceable, and comes into existence as the spectator retires. It is thus of peculiar truth and value; and instructive as a contrast to the dark shadows of his earlier time.

§ 38. Effect of sea after prolonged storm.

Few people, comparatively, have ever seen the effect on the sea of a powerful gale continued without intermission for three or four days and nights, and to those who have not, I believe it must be unimaginable, not from the mere force or size of surge, but from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air. The water from its prolonged agitation is beaten, not into mere creaming foam, but into masses of accumulated yeast,[1] which hang in ropes and wreaths from wave to wave, and where one curls over to break, form a festoon like a drapery, from its edge; these are taken up by the wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses, which make the air white and thick as with snow, only the flakes are a foot or two long each; the surges themselves are full of foam in their very bodies, underneath, making them white

[1] The "yesty waves" of Shakspeare have made the likeness familiar, and probably most readers take the expression as merely equivalent to "foamy;" but Shakspeare knew better. Sea-foam does not, under ordinary circumstances, last a moment after it is formed, but disappears, as above described, in a mere white film. But the foam of a prolonged tempest is altogether different; it is "whipped" foam, —thick, permanent, and, in a foul or discoloured sea, very ugly, especially in the way it hangs about the tops of the waves, and gathers into clotted concretions before the driving wind. The sea looks truly working or fermenting. The following passage from Fenimore Cooper is an interesting confirmation of the rest of the above description, which may be depended upon as entirely free from exaggeration:— "For the first time I now witnessed a tempest at sea. Gales, and pretty hard ones, I had often seen, but the force of the wind on this occasion as much exceeded that in ordinary gales of wind, as the force of these had exceeded that of a whole-sail breeze. The seas seemed crushed; the pressure of the swooping atmosphere, as the currents of the air went howling over the surface of the ocean, fairly preventing them from rising; or where a mound of water did appear, it was scooped up and borne off in spray, as the axe dubs inequalities from the log. When the day returned, a species of lurid, sombre light was diffused over the watery waste, though nothing was visible but the ocean and the ship. Even the sea-birds seemed to have taken refuge in the caverns of the adjacent coast, none re-appearing with the dawn. The air was full of spray, and it was with difficulty that the eye could penetrate as far into the humid atmosphere as half a mile."—*Miles Wallingford*. Half a mile is an over-estimate in coast.

all through, as the water is under a great cataract; and their masses, being thus half water and half air, are torn to pieces by the wind whenever they rise, and carried away in roaring smoke, which chokes and strangles like actual water. Add to this, that when the air has been exhausted of its moisture by long rain, the spray of the sea is caught by it as described above (Section III. Chapter IV. § 13), and covers its surface not merely with the smoke of finely divided water, but with boiling mist; imagine also the low rain-clouds brought down to the very level of the sea, as I have often seen them, whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave; and finally, conceive the surges themselves in their utmost pitch of power, velocity, vastness, and madness, lifting themselves in precipices and peaks, furrowed with their whirl of ascent, through all this chaos; and you will understand that there is indeed no distinction left between the sea and air; that no object, nor horizon, nor any landmark or natural evidence of position is left; that the heaven is all spray, and the ocean all cloud, and that you can see no farther in any direction than you could see through a cataract. Suppose the effect of the first sunbeam sent from above to show this annihilation to itself, and you have the sea picture of the Academy, 1842—the Snow-storm, one of the very grandest statements of sea-motion, mist, and light that has ever been put on canvass even by Turner. Of course it was not understood; his finest works never are; but there was some apology for the public's not comprehending this, for few people have had the opportunity of seeing the sea at such a time, and when they have, cannot face it. To hold by a mast or a rock, and watch it, is a prolonged endurance of drowning which few people have courage to go through. To those who have, it is one of the noblest lessons of nature.

§ 39. Turner's noblest work, the painting of the deep open sea in the Slave Ship.

But, I think, the noblest sea that Turner has ever painted, and, if so, the noblest certainly ever painted by man, is that of the Slave Ship, the chief Academy picture of the Exhibition of 1840. It is a sunset on the Atlantic, after prolonged storm; but the storm is partially lulled, and the torn and streaming rain-clouds are moving in scarlet lines to lose themselves in the hollow of the night. The whole surface of sea included in the picture is divided into

two ridges of enormous swell, not high, nor local, but a low, broad heaving of the whole ocean, like the lifting of its bosom by deep drawn breath after the torture of the storm. Between these two ridges the fire of the sunset falls along the trough of the sea, dyeing it with an awful but glorious light, the intense and lurid splendour which burns like gold, and bathes like blood. Along this fiery path and valley, the tossing waves by which the swell of the sea is restlessly divided, lift themselves in dark, indefinite, fantastic forms, each casting a faint and ghastly shadow behind it along the illumined foam. They do not rise everywhere, but three or four together in wild groups, fitfully and furiously, as the under strength of the swell compels or permits them; leaving between them treacherous spaces of level and whirling water, now lighted with green and lamp-like fire, now flashing back the gold of the declining sun, now fearfully dyed from above with the indistinguishable images of the burning clouds, which fall upon them in flakes of crimson and scarlet, and give to the reckless waves the added motion of their own fiery flying. Purple and blue, the lurid shadows of the hollow breakers are cast upon the mist of the night, which gathers cold and low, advancing like the shadow of death upon the guilty[1] ship as it labours amidst the lightning of the sea, its thin masts written upon the sky in lines of blood, girded with condemnation in that fearful hue which signs the sky with horror, and mixes its flaming flood with the sunlight,—and cast far along the desolate heave of the sepulchral waves, incarnadines the multitudinous sea.

§ 40. Its united excellences and perfection as a whole.

I believe, if I were reduced to rest Turner's immortality upon any single work, I should choose this. Its daring conception—ideal in the highest sense of the word—is based on the purest truth, and wrought out with the concentrated knowledge of a life; its colour is absolutely perfect, not one false or morbid hue in any part or line, and so modulated that every square inch of canvass is a perfect composition; its drawing as accurate as fearless; the ship buoyant, bending, and full of motion; its tones as true as they are wonderful;[2]

[1] She is a slaver, throwing her slaves overboard. The near sea is encumbered with corpses.

[2] There is a piece of tone of the same kind, equal in one part, but

and the whole picture dedicated to the most sublime of subjects and impressions—(completing thus the perfect system of all truth, which we have shown to be formed by Turner's works)—the power, majesty, and deathfulness of the open, deep, illimitable sea.

not so united with the rest of the picture, in the storm scene illustrative of the Antiquary,—a sunset light on polished sea. I ought to have particularly mentioned the sea in the Lowestoffe, as a piece of the cutting motion of shallow water, under storm, altogether in grey, which should be especially contrasted, as a piece of colour, with the greys of Vandevelde. And the sea in the Great Yarmouth should have been noticed for its expression of water in violent agitation, seen in enormous extent from a great elevation. There is almost every form of sea in it,—rolling waves dashing on the pier—successive breakers rolling to the shore—a vast horizon of multitudinous waves—and winding canals of calm water along the sands, bringing fragments of bright sky down into their yellow waste. There is hardly one of the views of the Southern Coast which does not give some new condition or circumstance of sea.

SECTION VI

OF TRUTH OF VEGETATION.—CONCLUSION

CHAPTER I

OF TRUTH OF VEGETATION

WE have now arrived at the consideration of what was, with the old masters, the subject of most serious and perpetual study. If they do not give us truth here, they cannot have the faculty of truth in them; for foliage is the chief component part of all their pictures, and is finished by them with a care and labour which, if bestowed without attaining truth, must prove either their total bluntness of perception, or total powerlessness of hand. With the Italian school I can scarcely recollect a single instance in which foliage does not form the greater part of the picture; in fact, they are rather painters of tree-portrait than landscape painters; for rocks, and sky, and architecture are usually mere accessories and backgrounds to the dark masses of laborious foliage, of which the composition principally consists. Yet we shall be less detained by the examination of foliage than by our former subjects; since where specific form is organized and complete, and the occurrence of the object universal, it is easy, without requiring any laborious attention in the reader, to demonstrate to him quite as much of the truth or falsehood of various representations of it, as may serve to determine the character and rank of the painter.

§ 1. Frequent occurrence of foliage in the works of the old masters.

It will be best to begin as nature does, with the stems and branches, and then to put the leaves on. And in speaking of trees generally, be it observed, when I say *all* trees, I mean only those ordinary forest or copse trees of Europe, which are the chief subjects of the landscape painter. I do not mean to include every kind of foliage which by any accident can find its way into a picture, but the ordinary trees of Europe,—oak, elm, ash, hazel, willow, birch, beech,

poplar, chestnut, pine, mulberry, olive, ilex, carubbe, and such others. I do not purpose to examine the characteristics of each tree; it will be enough to observe the laws common to all. First, then, neither the stems nor the boughs of any of the above trees *taper*, except where they fork.

§ 2. Laws common to all forest trees. Their branches do not taper, but only divide.

Wherever a stem sends off a branch, or a branch a lesser bough, or a lesser bough a bud, the stem or the branch is, on the instant, less in diameter by the exact quantity of the branch or the bough they have sent off, and they remain of the same diameter; or if there be any change, rather increase than diminish until they send off another branch or bough. This law is imperative and without exception; no bough, nor stem, nor twig, ever tapering or becoming narrower towards its extremity by a hair's breadth, save where it parts with some portion of its substance at a fork or bud, so that if all the twigs and sprays at the top and sides of the tree, which are, and *have been*, could be united without loss of space, they would form a round log of the diameter of the trunk from which they spring.

But as the trunks of most trees send off twigs and sprays of light under foliage, of which every individual fibre takes precisely its own thickness of wood from the parent stem, and as many of these drop off, leaving nothing but a small excrescence to record their existence, there is frequently a slight and delicate appearance of tapering bestowed on the trunk itself; while the same operation takes place much more extensively in the branches, it being natural to almost all trees to send out from their young limbs more wood than they can support, which, as the stem increases, gets contracted at the point of insertion, so as to check the flow of the sap, and then dies and drops off, leaving all along the bough, first on one side, then on another, a series of small excrescences, sufficient to account for a degree of tapering, which is yet so very slight, that if we select a portion of a branch with no real fork or living bough to divide it or diminish it, the tapering is scarcely to be detected by the eye; and if we select a portion without such evidences of past ramification, there will be found none whatsoever.

§ 3. Appearance of tapering caused by frequent buds.

But nature takes great care and pains to conceal this uniformity in her boughs. They are perpetually parting with little sprays here and there, which steal away their substance cautiously, and where the eye does not perceive the theft, until, a little way above, it feels the loss; and in the upper parts of the tree, the ramifications take place so constantly and delicately, that the effect upon the eye is precisely the same as if the boughs actually tapered, except here and there, where some avaricious one, greedy of substance, runs on for two or three yards without parting with anything, and becomes ungraceful in so doing.

§ 4. And care of nature to conceal the parallelism.

Hence we see that although boughs may, and must be represented as actually tapering, they must only be so when they are sending off foliage and sprays, and when they are at such a distance that the particular forks and divisions cannot be evident to the eye; and farther, even in such circumstances, the tapering never can be sudden or rapid. No bough ever, with appearance of smooth tapering, loses more than one-tenth of its diameter in a length of ten diameters. Any greater diminution than this must be accounted for by visible ramification, and must take place by steps, at each fork.

§ 5. The degree of tapering which may be represented as continuous.

And therefore we see at once that the stem of Gaspar Poussin's tall tree, on the right of the La Riccia, in the National Gallery, is a painting of a carrot or a parsnip, not of the trunk of a tree. For, being so near that every individual leaf is visible, we should not have seen, in nature, one branch or stem actually tapering. We should have received an *impression* of graceful diminution; but we should have been able, on examination, to trace it joint by joint, fork by fork into the thousand minor supports of the leaves. Gaspar Poussin's stem, on the contrary, only sends off four or five minor branches altogether, and both it and they taper violently, and without showing why or wherefore—without parting with a single twig—without showing one vestige of roughness or excrescence—and leaving, therefore, their unfortunate leaves to hold on as best they may. The latter, however, are clever leaves, and support themselves as swarming bees do, hanging on by each other.

§ 6. The trees of Gaspar Poussin;

But even this piece of work is a jest to the perpetration of the bough at the left-hand upper corner of the picture opposite to it—the View near Albano. This latter is a representation of an ornamental group of elephants' tusks, with feathers tied to the ends of them. Not the wildest imagination could ever conjure up in it the remotest resemblance to the bough of a tree. It might be the claws of a witch—the talons of an eagle—the horns of a fiend; but it is a full assemblage of every conceivable falsehood which can be told respecting foliage—a piece of work so barbarous in every way, that one glance at it ought to prove the complete charlatanism and trickery of the whole system of the old landscape painters. For I will depart for once from my usual plan, of abstaining from all assertion of a thing's being beautiful or otherwise; I will say here, at once, that such drawing as this is as ugly as it is childish, and as painful as it is false; and that the man who could tolerate, much more, who could deliberately set down such a thing on his canvass, had neither eye nor feeling for one single attribute or excellence of God's works. He might have drawn the other stem in excusable ignorance, or under some false impression of being able to improve upon nature; but *this* is conclusive and unpardonable. Again, take the stem of the chief tree in Claude's Narcissus. It is a very faithful portrait of a large boa-constrictor, with a handsome tail; the kind of trunk which young ladies at fashionable boarding-schools represent with nosegays at the top of them, by way of forest scenery.

§ 7. And of the Italian school generally, defy this law.

Let us refresh ourselves for a moment, by looking at the truth. We need not go to Turner, we will go to the man who next to him is unquestionably the greatest master of foliage in Europe—J. D. Harding.—Take the trunk of the largest stone-pine, Plate 25, in the Park and the Forest. For the first nine or ten feet from the ground it does not lose one hair's breadth of its diameter. But the shoot, broken off just under the crossing part of the distant tree, is followed by an instant diminution of the trunk, perfectly appreciable both by the eye and the compasses. Again, the stem maintains undiminished thickness, up to the two shoots on the left, from the loss of which it suffers again perceptibly. On the

§ 8. The truth, as it is given by J. D. Harding.

right, immediately above, is the stump of a very large bough, whose loss reduces the trunk suddenly to about two-thirds of what it was at the root. Diminished again, less considerably, by the minor branch close to this stump, it now retains its diameter up to the three branches, broken off just under the head, where it once more loses in diameter, and finally branches into the multitude of head-boughs, of which not one will be found tapering in any part, but losing themselves gradually by division among their offshoots and spray. This is nature, and beauty too.

But the old masters are not satisfied with drawing carrots for boughs. Nature can be violated in more ways than one, and the industry with which they seek out and adopt every conceivable mode of contradicting her is matter of no small interest. It is evident, from what we have above stated of the structure of all trees, that as no boughs diminish where they do not fork, so they cannot fork without diminishing. It is impossible that the smallest shoot can be sent out of a bough without a diminution of the diameter above it; and wherever a branch goes off it must not only be less in diameter than the bough from which it springs, but the bough beyond the fork must be less by precisely the quantity of the branch it has sent off.[1] Now observe the bough underneath the first bend of the great stem in Claude's Narcissus; it sends off four branches like the ribs of a leaf. The two lowest of these are both quite as thick as the parent stem, and the stem itself is much thicker after it has sent off the first one than it was before. The top boughs of the central tree, in the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, ramify in the same scientific way.

§ 9. Boughs, in consequence of this law, *must* diminish where they divide. Those of the old masters often do not.

[1] It sometimes happens that a morbid direction of growth will cause an exception here and there to this rule, the bough swelling beyond its legitimate size: knots and excrescences, of course, sometimes interfere with the effect of diminution. I believe that in the laurel, when it grows large and old, singular instances may be found of thick upper boughs and over quantity of wood at the extremities. All these accidents or exceptions are felt as such by the eye. They may occasionally be used by the painter in savage or grotesque scenery, or as points of contrast, but are no excuse for his ever losing sight of the general law.

But there are further conclusions to be drawn from this great principle in trees. As they only diminish where they divide, their increase of number is in precise proportion to their diminution of size, so that whenever we come to the extremities of boughs, we must have a multitude of sprays sufficient to make up, if they were united, the bulk of that from which they spring. Where a bough divides into two equal ramifications, the diameter of each of the two is about two-thirds that of the single one, and the sum of their diameters, therefore, one-fourth greater than the diameter of the single one. Hence, if no boughs died or were lost, the quantity of wood in the sprays would appear one-fourth greater than would be necessary to make up the thickness of the trunk. But the lost boughs remove the excess, and therefore, speaking broadly, the diameters of the outer boughs put together would generally just make up the diameter of the trunk. Precision in representing this is neither desirable nor possible. All that is required is just so much observance of the general principle as may make the eye feel satisfied that there is something like the same quantity of wood in the sprays which there is in the stem. But to do this there must be, what there always is in nature, an exceeding complexity of the outer sprays. This complexity gradually increases towards their extremities, of course exactly in proportion to the slenderness of the twigs. The slenderer they become, the more there are of them, until at last, at the extremities of the tree, they form a mass of intricacy, which in winter, when it can be seen, is scarcely distinguishable from fine herbage, and is beyond all power of definite representation; it can only be expressed by a mass of involved strokes. Also, as they shoot out in every direction, some are nearer, some more distant; some distinct, some faint; and their intersections and relations of distance are marked with the most exquisite gradations of aërial perspective. Now it will be found universally in the works of Claude, Gaspar, and Salvator that the boughs do *not* get in the least complex or multiplied towards the extremities—that each large limb forks only into two or three smaller ones, each of which vanishes into the air without any cause or reason for such unaccountable conduct—unless that the mass of leaves transfixed upon it or tied to it, entirely dependent on

§ 10. Boughs must multiply as they diminish. Those of the old masters do not.

its single strength, have been too much, as well they may be, for its powers of solitary endurance. This total ignorance of tree structure is shown throughout their works. The Sinon before Priam is an instance of it in a really fine work of Claude's, but the most gross examples are in the works of Salvator. It appears that this latter artist was hardly in the habit of studying from nature at all after his boyish ramble among the Calabrian hills; and I do not recollect any instance of a piece of his bough-drawing which is not palpably and demonstrably a made-up phantasm of the studio, the proof derivable from this illegitimate tapering being one of the most convincing. The painter is always visibly embarrassed to reduce the thick boughs to spray, and *feeling* (for Salvator naturally had acute feeling for truth) that the bough was wrong when it tapered suddenly, he accomplishes its diminution by an impossible protraction; throwing out shoot after shoot until his branches straggle all across the picture, and at last disappear unwillingly where there is no room for them to stretch any farther. The consequence is, that whatever leaves are put upon such boughs have evidently no adequate support, their power of leverage is enough to uproot the tree; or if the boughs are left bare, they have the look of the long tentacula of some complicated marine monster, or of the waving endless threads of bunchy sea-weed, instead of the firm, upholding, braced, and bending grace of natural boughs. I grant that this is in a measure done by Salvator from a love of ghastliness, and that in certain scenes it is in a sort allowable; but it is in a far greater degree done from pure ignorance of tree structure, as is sufficiently proved by the landscape of the Pitti palace, Peace burning the arms of War; where the spirit of the scene is intended to be quite other than ghastly, and yet the tree branches show the usual errors in an extraordinary degree; every one of their arrangements is impossible, and the trunk of the tree could not for a moment support the foliage it is loaded with. So also in the pictures of the Guadagni palace. And even where the skeleton look of branches is justifiable or desirable, there is no occasion for any violation of natural laws. I have seen more spectral character in the real limbs of a blasted oak, than ever in Salvator's best monstrosities; more horror is to be obtained by right combination of inventive line, than by drawing tree

§ 11. Bough-drawing of Salvator.

branches as if they were wing-bones of a pterodactyle. All departure from natural forms to give fearfulness is mere Germanism; it is the work of fancy, not of imagination,[1] and instantly degrades whatever it affects to third-rate level. There is nothing more marked in truly great men, than their power of being dreadful without being false or licentious. In Tintoret's Murder of Abel, the head of the sacrificed firstling lies in the corner of the foreground obscurely sketched in, and with the light gleaming upon its glazed eyes. There is nothing exaggerated about the head, but there is more horror got out of it, and more of death suggested by its treatment, than if he had turned all the trees of his picture into skeletons, and raised a host of demons to drive the club.

§ 12. All these errors especially shown in Claude's sketches, and concentrated in a work of G. Poussin's.

It is curious that in Salvator's sketches or etchings there is less that is wrong than in his paintings,—there seems a fresher remembrance of nature about them. Not so with Claude. It is only by looking over his sketches, in the British Museum, that a complete and just idea is to be formed of his capacities of error; for the feeling and arrangement of many of them are those of an advanced age, so that we can scarcely set them down for what they resemble—the work of a boy ten years old; and the drawing being seen without any aids of tone or colour to set it off, shows in its naked falsehood. The windy landscape of Poussin, opposite the Dido and Eneas, in the National Gallery, presents us, in the foreground tree, with a piece of atrocity which I think, to any person who candidly considers it, may save me all farther trouble of demonstrating the errors of ancient art. I do not in the least suspect the picture: the tones of it, and much of the handling, are masterly; yet that foreground tree comprises every conceivable violation of truth which the human hand can commit, or head invent, in drawing a tree—except only, that it is not drawn root uppermost. It has no bark, no roughness nor character of stem; its boughs do not grow out of each other, but are stuck into each other; they ramify without diminishing, diminish without ramifying, are terminated by no complicated sprays, have their leaves tied to their ends, like the heads of Dutch brooms; and finally, and chiefly, they are

[1] Compare Part III. Sect. II. Chap. IV. § 6, 7.

evidently not made of wood, but of some soft elastic substance, which the wind can stretch out as it pleases, for there is not a vestige of an angle in any one of them. Now, the fiercest wind that ever blew upon the earth, could not take the angles out of the bough of a tree an inch thick. The whole bough bends together, retaining its elbows, and angles, and natural form, but affected throughout with curvature in each of its parts and joints. That part of it which was before perpendicular being bent aside, and that which was before sloping, being bent into still greater inclination, the angle at which the two parts meet remains the same; or if the strain be put in the opposite direction, the bough will break long before it loses its angle. You will find it difficult to bend the angles out of the youngest sapling, if they be marked; and absolutely impossible, with a strong bough. You may break it, but you will not destroy its angles. And if you watch a tree in the wildest storm, you will find that though all its boughs are bending, none lose their character but the utmost shoots and sapling spray. Hence Gaspar Poussin, by his bad drawing, does not make his storm strong, but his tree weak; he does not make his gust violent, but his boughs of Indian-rubber.

§ 13. Impossibility of the angles of boughs being taken out of them by wind.

These laws respecting vegetation are so far more imperative than those which were stated respecting water, that the greatest artist cannot violate them without danger, because they are laws resulting from organic structure, which it is always painful to see interrupted; on the other hand, they have this in common with all laws, that they may be observed with mathematical precision, yet with no grateful result; the disciplined eye and the life in the woods are worth more than all botanical knowledge. For there is that about the growing of the tree trunk, and that grace in its upper ramification which cannot be taught, and which cannot even be seen but by eager watchfulness. There is not an Exhibition passes, but there appear in it hundreds of elaborate paintings of trees, many of them executed from nature. For three hundred years back, trees have been drawn with affection by all the civilized nations of Europe, and yet I repeat boldly, what I before asserted, that no men but Titian and Turner ever drew the stem of a tree.

§ 14. Bough-drawing of Titian.

Generally, I think, the perception of the muscular qualities of the tree trunk incomplete, except in men who have studied the human figure, and in loose expression of those characters, the painter who can draw the living muscle seldom fails; but the thoroughly peculiar lines belonging to woody fibre, can only be learned by patient forest study; and hence in all the trees of the merely historical painters, there is fault of some kind or another, commonly exaggeration of the muscular swellings, or insipidity and want of spring in curvature, or fantasticism and unnaturalness of arrangement, and especially a want of the peculiar characters of bark which express the growth and age of the tree; for bark is no mere excrescence, lifeless and external—it is a skin of especial significance in its indications of the organic form beneath; in places under the arms of the tree it wrinkles up and forms fine lines *round* the trunk, inestimable in their indication of the direction of its surface; in others, it bursts or peels longitudinally, and the rending and bursting of it are influenced in direction and degree by the under-growth and swelling of the woody fibre, and are not a mere roughness and granulated pattern of the hide. Where there are so many points to be observed, some are almost always exaggerated, and others missed, according to the predilections of the painter. Rembrandt and Albert Durer have given some splendid examples of woody texture, but both miss the grace of the great lines. Titian took a larger view and reached a higher truth, yet (as before noticed), from the habit of drawing the figure, he admits too much flaccidity and bend, and sometimes makes his tree trunks look flexible like sea-weed. There is a peculiar stiffness and spring about the curves of the wood, which separates them completely from animal curves, and which especially defies recollection or invention; it is so subtle that it escapes but too often, even in the most patient study from nature; it lies within the thickness of a pencil line. Farther, the modes of ramification of the upper branches are so varied, inventive, and graceful, that the least alteration of them, even in the measure of a hair's-breadth, spoils them; and though it is sometimes possible to get rid of a troublesome bough, accidentally awkward, or in some minor respects to assist the arrangement, yet so far as the real branches are copied, the hand libels their lovely curvatures even in its best attempts to follow them.

These two characters, the woody stiffness hinted through muscular line, and the inventive grace of the upper boughs, have never been rendered except by Turner; he does not merely draw them better than others, but he is the only man who has ever drawn them at all. Of the woody character, the tree subjects of the Liber Studiorum afford marked examples; the Cephalus and Procris, scenes near the Grand Chartreuse, and Blair Athol, Juvenile Tricks, and Hedging and Ditching, may be particularized; in the England series, the Bolton Abbey is perhaps a more characteristic and thoroughly Turneresque example than any.

§ 15. Bough-drawing of Turner.

Of the arrangement of the upper boughs, the Æsacus and Hesperie is perhaps the most consummate example, the absolute truth and simplicity and freedom from anything like fantasticism or animal form being as marked on the one hand, as the exquisite imaginativeness of the lines on the other: among the Yorkshire subjects the Aske Hall, Kirby Lonsdale Churchyard, and Brignall Church are most characteristic: among the England subjects the Warwick, Dartmouth Cove, Durham, and Chain Bridge over the Tees, where the piece of thicket on the right has been well rendered by the engraver, and is peculiarly expressive of the aërial relations and play of light among complex boughs. The Vignette at the opening of Rogers's Pleasures of Memory, that of Chiefswood Cottage in the Illustrations to Scott's Works, and the Chateau de la belle Gabrielle, engraved for the Keepsake, are among the most graceful examples accessible to every one; the Crossing the Brook will occur at once to those acquainted with the artist's gallery. The drawing of the stems in all these instances, and indeed in all the various and frequent minor occurrences of such subject throughout the painter's works is entirely unique, there is nothing of the same kind in art.

Let us, however, pass to the leafage of the elder landscape painters, and see if it atones for the deficiencies of the stems. One of the most remarkable characters of natural leafage is the constancy with which, while the leaves are arranged on the spray with exquisite regularity, that regularity is modified in their actual effect. For as in every group of leaves some are seen sideways, forming merely long lines, some foreshortened,

§ 16. Leafage. Its variety and symmetry.

some crossing each other, every one differently turned and placed from all the others, the forms of the leaves, though in themselves similar, give rise to a thousand strange and differing forms in the group; and the shadows of some, passing over the others, still farther disguise and confuse the mass, until the eye can distinguish nothing but a graceful and flexible disorder of innumerable forms, with here and there a perfect leaf on the extremity, or a symmetrical association of one or two, just enough to mark the specific character and to give unity and grace, but never enough to repeat in one group what was done in another—never enough to prevent the eye from feeling that, however regular and mathematical may be the structure of parts, what is composed out of them is as various and infinite as any other part of nature. Nor does this take place in general effect only. Break off an elm bough, three feet long, in full leaf, and lay it on the table before you, and try to draw it, leaf for leaf. It is ten to one if in the whole bough (provided you do not twist it about as you work) you find one form of a leaf exactly like another; perhaps you will not even have *one* complete. Every leaf will be oblique, or foreshortened, or curled, or crossed by another, or shaded by another, or have something or other the matter with it; and though the whole bough will look graceful and symmetrical, you will scarcely be able to tell how or why it does so, since there is not one line of it like another. Now go to Gaspar Poussin, and take one of his sprays where they come against the sky; you may count it all round, one, two, three, four, one bunch; five, six, seven, eight, two bunches; nine, ten, eleven, twelve, three bunches; with four leaves each,—and such leaves! every one precisely the same as its neighbour, blunt and round at the end (where every forest leaf is sharp, except that of the fig-tree), tied together by the roots, and so fastened on to the demoniacal claws above described, one bunch to each claw.

§ 17. Perfect regularity of Poussin.

But if nature is so various when you have a bough on the table before you, what must she be when she retires from you, and gives you her whole mass and multitude? The leaves then at the extremities become as fine as dust, a mere confusion of points and lines between you and the sky, a confusion which you might as well hope to draw sea-sand particle

§ 18. Exceeding intricacy of nature's foliage.

by particle, as to imitate leaf for leaf. This, as it comes down into the body of the tree, gets closer, but never opaque; it is always transparent, with crumbling lights in it letting you through to the sky; then, out of this, come, heavier and heavier, the masses of illumined foliage, all dazzling and inextricable, save here and there a single leaf on the extremities; then, under these, you get deep passages of broken, irregular gloom, passing into transparent, green-lighted, misty hollows; the twisted stems glancing through them in their pale and entangled infinity, and the shafted sunbeams, rained from above, running along the lustrous leaves for an instant; then lost, then caught again on some emerald bank or knotted root, to be sent up again with a faint reflex on the white under sides of dim groups of drooping foliage, the shadows of the upper boughs running in grey network down the glossy stems, and resting in quiet chequers upon the glittering earth; but all penetrable and transparent, and, in proportion, inextricable and incomprehensible, except where across the labyrinth and the mystery of the dazzling light and dream-like shadow, falls, close to us, some solitary spray, some wreath of two or three motionless large leaves, the type and embodying of all that in the rest we feel and imagine, but can never see.

§ 19. How contradicted by the tree-patterns of G. Poussin.

Now, with thus much of nature in your mind, go to Gaspar Poussin's View near Albano, in the National Gallery. It is the very subject to unite all these effects,—a sloping bank shaded with intertwined forest;—and what has Gaspar given us? A mass of smooth, opaque, varnished brown, without one interstice, one change of hue, or any vestige of leafy structure in its interior, or in those parts of it, I should say, which are intended to represent interior; but out of it, over it rather, at regular intervals, we have circular groups of greenish touches, always the same in size, shape, and distance from each other, containing so exactly the same number of touches each, that you cannot tell one from another. There are eight or nine and thirty of them, laid over each other like fish-scales; the shade being most carefully made darker and darker as it recedes from each until it comes to the edge of the next, against which it cuts in the same sharp circular line, and then begins to decline again, until the canvass is covered, with about as much intelligence

or feeling of art as a house-painter has in marbling a wainscot, or a weaver in repeating an ornamental pattern. What is there in this, which the most determined prejudice in favour of the old masters can for a moment suppose to resemble trees? It is exactly what the most ignorant beginner, trying to make a complete drawing, would lay down,—exactly the conception of trees which we have in the works of our worst drawing-masters, where the shade is laid on with the black lead and stump, and every human power exerted to make it look like a kitchen-grate well polished.

§ 20. How followed by Creswick.

Oppose to this the drawing even of our somewhat inferior tree-painters. I will not insult Harding by mentioning his work after it, but take Creswick, for instance, and match one of his sparkling bits of green leafage with this tree-pattern of Poussin's. I do not say there is not a dignity and impressiveness about the old landscape, owing to its simplicity; and I am very far from calling Creswick's good tree-painting; it is false in colour and deficient in mass and freedom, and has many other defects, but it is the work of a man who has sought earnestly for truth; and who, with one thought or memory of nature in his heart, could look at the two landscapes, and receive Poussin's with ordinary patience? Take Creswick in black and white, where he is unembarrassed by his fondness for pea-green, the illustrations, for instance, to the Nut-brown Maid, in the Book of English Ballads. Look at the intricacy and fulness of the dark oak foliage where it bends over the brook, see how you can go through it, and into it, and come out behind it to the quiet bit of sky. Observe the grey, aërial transparency of the stunted copse on the left, and the entangling of the boughs where the light near foliage detaches itself. Above all, note the forms of the masses of light. Not things like scales or shells, sharp at the edge and flat in the middle, but irregular and rounded, stealing in and out accidentally from the shadow, and presenting, as the masses of all trees do, in general outline, a resemblance to the specific forms of the leaves of which they are composed. Turn over the page, and look into the weaving of the foliage and sprays against the dark night-sky, how near they are, yet how untraceable; see how the moonlight creeps up underneath them, trembling and shivering on the silver boughs above; note also, the descending bit of

ivy on the left, of which only two leaves are made out, and the rest is confusion, or tells only in the moonlight like faint flakes of snow.

But nature observes another principle in her foliage more important even than its intricacy. She always secures an exceeding harmony and repose. She is *so* intricate that her minuteness of parts becomes to the eye, at a little distance, one united veil or cloud of leaves, to destroy the evenness of which is perhaps a greater fault than to destroy its transparency. Look at Creswick's oak again, in its dark parts. Intricate as it is, all is blended into a cloud-like harmony of shade, which becomes fainter and fainter, as it retires, with the most delicate flatness and unity of tone. And it is by this kind of vaporescence, so to speak, by this flat, misty, unison of parts, that nature, and her faithful followers, are enabled to keep the eye in perfect repose in the midst of profusion, and to display beauty of form, wherever they choose, to the greatest possible advantage, by throwing it across some quiet, visionary passage of dimness and rest.

§ 21. Perfect unity in nature's foliage.

It is here that Hobbima and Both fail. They can paint oak leafage faithfully, but do not know where to stop, and by doing too much, lose the truth of all,—lose the very truth of detail at which they aim, for all their minute work only gives two leaves to nature's twenty. They are evidently incapable of even thinking of a tree, much more of drawing it, except leaf by leaf; they have no notion nor sense of simplicity, mass, or obscurity, and when they come to distance, where it is totally impossible that leaves should be separately seen, yet, being incapable of conceiving or rendering the grand and quiet forms of truth, they are reduced to paint their bushes with dots and touches expressive of leaves three feet broad each. Nevertheless there is a genuine aim in their works, and their failure is rather to be attributed to ignorance of art, than to such want of sense for nature as we find in Claude or Poussin; and when they come close home, we sometimes receive from them fine passages of mechanical truth.

§ 22. Total want of it in Both and Hobbima.

But let us oppose to their works the group of trees on the left in Turner's Marly.[1] We have there perfect and ceaseless

[1] This group I have before noticed as singularly (but, I doubt not, accidentally, and in consequence of the love of the two great painters

intricacy to oppose to Poussin,—perfect and unbroken repose to oppose to Hobbima; and in the unity of these the perfection of truth. This group may be taken as a fair standard of Turner's tree-painting. We have in it the admirably drawn stems, instead of the claws or the serpents; full, transparent, boundless intricacy, instead of the shell pattern; and misty depth of intermingled light and leafage, instead of perpetual repetition of one mechanical touch.

§ 23. How rendered by Turner.

I have already spoken (Section II. Chapter IV. § 15,) of the way in which mystery and intricacy are carried even into the nearest leaves of the foreground, and noticed the want of such intricacy even in the best works of the old masters. Claude's are particularly deficient, for by representing every particular leaf of them, or trying to do so, he makes nature finite, and even his nearest bits of leafage are utterly false, for they have neither shadows modifying their form, (compare Section II. Chapter III. § 7,) nor sparkling lights, nor confused intersections of their own forms and lines; and the perpetual repetition of the same shape of leaves and the same arrangement, relieved from a black ground, is more like an ornamental pattern for dress than the painting of a foreground. Nevertheless, the foliage of Claude, in his middle distances, is the finest and truest part of his pictures, and, on the whole, affords the best example of good drawing to be found in ancient art. It is always false in colour, and has not boughs enough amongst it, and the stems commonly look a great deal nearer than any part of it, but it is still graceful, flexible, abundant, intricate; and, in all but colour and connection with stems, very nearly right. Of the perfect painting of thick, leafy foreground, Turner's Mercury and Argus, and Oakhampton, are the standards.[1]

§ 24. The near leafage of Claude. His middle distances are good.

for the same grand forms) resembling that introduced by Tintoret in the background of his Cain and Abel.

[1] The above paragraphs I have left as originally written, because they are quite true as far as they reach; but, like many other portions of this essay, they take in a very small portion of the truth. I shall not add to them at present, because I can explain my meaning better in our consideration of the laws of beauty; but the reader must bear in mind that what is above stated refers, throughout, to large masses of foliage seen under broad sunshine,—and it has especial reference to Turner's enormous scale of scene, and intense desire of light. In twilight, when

The last and most important truth to be observed respecting trees, is that their boughs always, in finely grown individuals, bear among themselves such a ratio of length as to describe with their extremities a symmetrical curve, constant for each species; and within this curve, all the irregularities, segments, and divisions of the tree are included, each bough reaching the limit with its extremity, but not passing it. When a tree is perfectly grown, each bough starts from the trunk with just so much wood as, allowing for constant ramification, will enable it to reach the terminal line; or if by mistake, it start with too little, it will proceed without ramifying till within a distance where it may safely divide; if on the contrary it start with too much, it will ramify quickly and constantly; or, to express the real operation more accurately, each bough, growing on so as to keep even with its neighbours, takes so much wood from the trunk as is sufficient to enable it to do so, more or less in proportion as it ramifies fast or slowly. In badly grown trees, the boughs are apt to fall short of the curve, or at least, there are so many jags and openings that its symmetry is interrupted; and in young trees, the impatience of the upper shoots frequently breaks the line; but in perfect and mature trees, every bough does its duty completely, and the line of curve is quite filled up, and the mass within it unbroken, so that the tree assumes the shape of a dome, as in the oak, or, in tall trees, of a pear with the stalk downmost. The old masters paid no

§ 25. Universal termination of trees in symmetrical curves.

§ 26. Altogether unobserved by the old masters. Always given by Turner.

tree-forms are seen against sky, other laws come into operation, as well as in subject of narrow limits and near foreground. It is, I think, to be regretted that Turner does not in his Academy pictures sometimes take more confined and gloomy subjects, like that grand one, near the Chartreuse, of the Liber Studiorum, wherein his magnificent power of elaborating close foliage might be developed; but, for the present, let the reader, with respect to what has been here said of close foliage, note the drawing of the leaves in that plate, in the Æsacus and Hesperie, and the Cephalus, and the elaboration of the foregrounds in the Yorkshire drawings; let him compare what is said of Turner's foliage painting above in Part II. Sect. I. Chap. VII., § 40, § 41, and of Titian's previously, as well as Part III. Sect. I. Chap. VIII., and Sect. II. Chap. IV. § 21. I shall hereafter endeavour to arrange the subject in a more systematic manner, but what additional observations I may have to make will none of them be in any wise more favourable to Gaspar, Salvator, or Hobbima, than the above paragraphs.

attention whatsoever to this great principle. They swing their boughs about, anywhere and everywhere; each stops or goes on just as it likes, nor will it be possible, in any of their works, to find a single example in which any symmetrical curve is indicated by the extremities.[1]

But I need scarcely tell any one in the slightest degree acquainted with the works of Turner, how rigidly and constantly he adheres to this principle of nature; taking in his highest compositions the perfect ideal form, every spray being graceful and varied in itself, but inevitably terminating at the assigned limit, and filling up the curve without break or gap; in his lower works, taking less perfect form, but invariably hinting the constant tendency in all, and thus, in spite of his abundant complexity, he arranges his trees under simpler and grander forms than any other artist, even among the moderns.

§ 27. Foliage painting on the Continent.

It was above asserted that J. D. Harding is, after Turner, the greatest master of foliage in Europe; I ought, however, to state that my knowledge of the modern landscape of Germany is very limited, and that, even with respect to France and Italy, I judge rather from the general tendency of study and character of mind visible in the annual Exhibition of the Louvre, and in some galleries of modern paintings at Milan, Venice, and Florence, than from any detailed acquaintance with the works of their celebrated painters. Yet I think I can hardly be mistaken. I have seen nothing to induce me to take a closer survey; no life knowledge or emotion in any quarter; nothing but the meanest and most ignorant copyism of vulgar details, coupled with a style of conception resembling that of the various lithographic ideals on the first leaves of the music of pastoral ballads. An exception ought, however,

[1] Perhaps, in some instances, this may be the case with the trees of Nicholas Poussin; but even with him the boughs only touch the line of limit with their central *points* of extremity, and are not *sectors* of the great curve—forming a part of it with expanded extremities, as in nature. Draw a few straight lines, from the centre to the circumference of a circle. The forms included between them are the forms of the individual boughs of a fine tree, with all their ramifications (only the external curve is not a circle, but more frequently two parabolas—which, I believe, it is in the oak—or an ellipse). But each bough of the old masters is club-shaped, and broadest, not at the outside of the tree, but a little way towards its centre.

to be made in favour of French etching; some studies in black and white may be seen in the narrow passages of the Louvre of very high merit, showing great skill and delicacy of execution, and most determined industry; (in fact, I think when the French artist fails, it is never through fear of labour;) nay, more than this, some of them exhibit acute perception of landscape character and great power of reaching simple impressions of gloom, wildness, sound, and motion. Some of their illustrated works also exhibit these powers in a high degree; there is a spirit, fire, and sense of reality about some of the wood-cuts to the large edition of Paul and Virginia, and a determined rendering of separate feeling in each, such as we look for in vain in our own ornamental works.[1] But the French appear to have no teaching such as might carry them beyond this; their entire ignorance of colour renders the assumption of the brush instantly fatal, and the false, forced, and impious sentiment of the nation renders anything like grand composition altogether impossible.

§ 28. Foliage of J. D. Harding. Its deficiencies.

It is therefore only among good artists of our own school that I think any fair comparison can be instituted, and I wish to assert Harding's knowledge of foliage more distinctly, because he neither does justice to himself, nor is, I think, rightly estimated by his fellow-artists. I shall not make any invidious remarks respecting individuals, but I think it necessary to state generally, that the style of foliage-painting chiefly characteristic of the pictures on the line of the Royal Academy is of the most degraded kind;[2] and that, except Turner and Mulready, we have, as far as I know, no Royal Academician capable of painting even the smallest portion of foliage in a dignified or correct manner; all is lost in green shadows with glittering yellow lights, white trunks with black patches on them, and leaves of no species in particular. Much laborious and clever foliage-drawing is to be found in the rooms of the New Water-Colour Society;

[1] On the other hand, nothing can be more exquisitely ridiculous than the French illustrations of a second or third-rate order, as those to the Harmonies of Lamartine.

[2] Of Stanfield's foliage I remember too little to enable me to form any definite judgment; it is a pity that he so much neglects this noble element of landscape.

but we have no one in any wise comparable to Harding for thorough knowledge of the subject, for power of expression in a sketch from nature, or for natural and unaffected conception in the study.

Maintaining for him this high position, it is necessary that I should also state those deficiencies which appear to me to conceal his real power, and in no small degree to prevent his progress.

His over fondness for brilliant execution, I have already noticed. He is fonder of seeing something tolerably like a tree produced with few touches, than something very like a tree produced with many. Now, it is quite allowable that occasionally, and in portions of his picture, a great artist should indulge himself in this luxury of sketching, yet it is a perilous luxury; it blunts the feeling and weakens the hand. I have said enough in various places respecting the virtues of negligence and of finish, (compare above the chapter on Ideas of Power in Part I. Sect. II., and Part III. Sect. I. Ch. X. § 4,) and I need only say here, therefore, that Harding's foliage is never sufficiently finished, and has at its best the look of a rapid sketch from nature touched upon at home. In 1843 (I think), there was a pretty drawing in the rooms of the Water-Colour Society,—the clear green water of a torrent resting among stones, with copse-like wood on each side, a bridge in the distance, a white flower (water lily?) catching the eye in front; the tops of the trees on the left of this picture were mere broad blots of colour dashed upon the sky and connected by stems. I allow the power necessary to attain any look of foliage by such means, but it is power abused: by no such means can any of the higher virtue and impressiveness of foliage be rendered. In the use of body colour for near leaves, his execution is also too hasty; often the touches are mere square or round dots, which can be understood only for foliage by their arrangement. This fault was especially marked in the trees of his picture painted for the Academy two years ago; they were very nearly shapeless, and could not stand even in courtesy for walnut leaves, for which, judging by the make of the tree, they must have been intended.

§ 29. His brilliancy of execution too manifest.

His drawing of boughs is, in all points of demonstrable

law, right, and very frequently easy and graceful also; yet it has two eminent faults, the first, that the flow of the bough is sacrificed to its texture, the pencil checking itself and hesitating at dots, and stripes, and knots, instead of following the grand and unbroken tendency of growth: the second, that however good the arrangement may be as far as regards merely flexibility, intricacy, and freedom, there are none of those composed groups of line which are unfailing in nature. Harding's work is not grand enough to be natural. The drawings in the Park and the Forest, are, I believe, almost facsimiles of sketches made from nature; yet it is evident at once that in all of them nothing but the general lie and disposition of the boughs has been taken from the tree, and that no single branch or spray has been faithfully copied or patiently studied.

§ 30. His bough-drawing and choice of form.

This want of close study necessarily causes several deficiencies of feeling respecting general form. Harding's choice is always of tree forms comparatively imperfect, leaning this way and that, and unequal in the lateral arrangements of foliage. Such forms are often graceful, always picturesque but rarely grand; and, when systematically adopted, untrue. It requires more patient study to attain just feeling of the dignity and character of a purely formed tree with all its symmetries perfect.

One more cause of incorrectness I may note, though it is not peculiar to the artist's tree-drawing, but attaches to his general system of sketching. In Harding's valuable work on the use of the Lead Pencil, there is one principle advanced which I believe to be false and dangerous, that the local colour of objects is not thereby to be rendered. I think the instance given is that of some baskets, whose darkness is occasioned solely by the touches indicating the wicker-work. Now, I believe, that an essential difference between the sketch of a great and of a comparatively inferior master is, that the former is conceived entirely in shade and colour, and its masses are blocked out with reference to both, while the inferior draughtsman checks at textures and petty characters of object. If Rembrandt had had to sketch such baskets, he would have troubled himself very little about the wicker-work;

§ 31. Local colour, how far expressible in black and white, and with what advantage.

but he would have looked to see where they came dark or light on the sand, and where there were any sparkling points of light on the wet osiers. These darks and lights he would have scratched in with the fastest lines he could, leaving no white paper but at the wet points of lustre; if he had had time, the wicker-work would have come afterwards.[1] And I think, that the first thing to be taught to any pupil, is neither how to manage the pencil, nor how to attain character of outline, but rather to see where things are light and where they are dark, and to draw them as he sees them, never caring whether his lines be dexterous or slovenly. The result of such study is the immediate substitution of downright drawing for symbolism, and afterwards a judicious moderation in the use of extreme lights and darks; for where local colours are really drawn, so much of what seems violently dark is found to come light against something else, and so much of what seems high light to come dark against the sky, that the draughtsman trembles at finding himself plunged either into blackness or whiteness, and seeks, as he should, for means of obtaining force without either.

It is in consequence of his evident habit of sketching more with a view to detail and character than to the great masses, that Harding's chiaroscuro is frequently crude, scattered, and petty. Black shadows occur under his distant trees, white high lights on his foreground rocks, the foliage and trunks are divided by violent oppositions into separate masses, and the branches lose in spots of moss and furrowings of bark their soft roundings of delicate form, and their grand relations to each other and the sky.

§ 32. Opposition between great manner and great knowledge.

It is owing to my respect for the artist, and my belief in his power and conscientious desire to do what is best, that I have thus extended these somewhat unkind remarks. On the other hand, it is to be remembered, that his knowledge of nature is most extended, and his dexterity of drawing most instructive, especially considering his range of

[1] It is true that many of Rembrandt's etchings are merely in line, but it may be observed that the subject is universally *conceived* in light and shade, and that the lines are either merely guides in the arrangement, or an exquisite indication of the key-notes of shade, on which the after system of it is to be based—portions of fragmentary finish, showing the completeness of the conception.

subject; for whether in water, rock, or foliage, he is equally skilful in attaining whatever he desires, (though he does not always desire all that he ought); and artists should keep in mind, that neither grandeur of manner nor truth of system can atone for the want of this knowledge and this skill. Constable's manner is good and great, but being unable to draw even a log of wood, much more a trunk of a tree or a stone, he left his works destitute of substance, mere studies of effect without any expression of specific knowledge; and thus even what is great in them has been productive, I believe, of very great injury in its encouragement of the most superficial qualities of the English school.

§ 33. Foliage of Cox, Fielding, and Cattermole.

The foliage of David Cox has been already noticed (preface to second edition). It is altogether exquisite in colour, and in its impressions of coolness, shade, and mass; of its drawing I cannot say anything, but that I should be sorry to see it better. Copley Fielding's is remarkable for its intricacy and elegance; it is, however, not free from affectation, and, as has been before remarked, is always evidently composed in the study. The execution is too rough and woolly; it is wanting in simplicity, sharpness, and freshness,—above all in specific character: not, however, in his middle distances, where the rounded masses of forest and detached blasted trunks of fir are usually very admirable. Cattermole has very grand conceptions of general form, but wild and without substance, and therefore incapable of long maintaining their attractiveness, especially lately, the execution having become in the last degree coarse and affected. This is bitterly to be regretted, for few of our artists would paint foliage better, if he would paint it from nature, and with reverence.

§ 34. Hunt and Creswick. Green, how to be rendered expressive of light, and offensive if otherwise.

Hunt, I think, fails, and fails only, in foliage; fails, as the Daguerreotype does, from over fidelity; for foliage will *not* be imitated, it must be reasoned out and suggested; yet Hunt is the only man we have who can paint the real leaf green under sunlight, and, in this respect, his trees are delicious,—summer itself. Creswick has sweet feeling, and tries for the real green too, but, from want of science in his shadows, ends in green paint instead of green light; in mere local colour, instead of colour

raised by sunshine. One example is enough to show where the fault lies. In his picture of the Weald of Kent, in the British Institution, this year, there was a cottage in the middle distance with white walls, and a red roof. The dark sides of the white walls and of the roof were of the same colour, a dark purple—wrong for both. Repeated inaccuracies of this kind necessarily deprive even the most brilliant colour of all appearance of sunshine, and they are much to be deprecated in Creswick, as he is one of the very few artists who *do* draw from nature, and try for nature. Some of his thickets and torrent-beds are most painfully studied, and yet he cannot draw a bough nor a stone. I suspect he is too much in the habit of studying only large views on the spot, and not of drawing small portions thoroughly. I trust it will be seen that these, as all other remarks that I have made throughout this volume on particular works, are not in depreciation of, or unthankfulness for, what the artist has done, but in the desire that he should do himself more justice and more honour. I have much pleasure in Creswick's works, and I am glad always to see them admired by others.

§ 35. Conclusion. Works of J. Linnell and S. Palmer.

I shall conclude this sketch of the foliage art of England, by mention of two artists, whom I believe to be representative of a considerable class, admirable in their reverence and patience of study, yet unappreciated by the public, because what they do is unrecommended by dexterities of handling. The forest studies of J. Linnell are peculiarly elaborate, and, in many points, most skilful; they fail perhaps of interest, owing to over fulness of detail and a want of generalization in the effect; but even a little more of the Harding sharpness of touch would set off their sterling qualities, and make them felt. A less known artist, S. Palmer, lately admitted a member of the Old Water-Colour Society, is deserving of the very highest place among faithful followers of nature. His studies of foreign foliage especially are beyond all praise for care and fulness. I have never seen a stone pine or a cypress drawn except by him; and his feeling is as pure and grand as his fidelity is exemplary. He has not, however, yet, I think, discovered what is necessary and unnecessary in a great picture; and his works, sent to the Society's rooms, have been most unfavourable examples of

his power, and have been generally, as yet, in places where all that is best in them is out of sight. I look to him, nevertheless, unless he lose himself in over reverence for certain conventionalisms of the elder schools, as one of the probable renovators and correctors of whatever is failing or erroneous in the practice of English art.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL REMARKS RESPECTING THE TRUTH OF TURNER

§ 1. No necessity of entering into discussion of architectural truth.

We have now arrived at some general conception of the extent of Turner's knowledge, and the truth of his practice, by the deliberate examination of the characteristics of the four great elements of landscape—sky, earth, water, and vegetation. I have not thought it necessary to devote a chapter to architecture, because enough has been said on this subject in Part II. Sect. I. Chap. VII.; and its general truths, which are those with which the landscape painter, as such, is chiefly concerned, require only a simple and straightforward application of those rules of which every other material object of a landscape has required a most difficult and complicated application. Turner's knowledge of perspective probably adds to his power in the arrangement of every order of subject; but ignorance on this head is rather disgraceful than knowledge meritorious. It is disgraceful, for instance, that any man should commit such palpable and atrocious errors in ordinary perspective as are seen in the quay in Claude's sea-piece, No. 14, National Gallery, or in the curved portico of No. 30; but still these are not points to be taken into consideration as having anything to do with artistical rank, just as, though we should say it was disgraceful if a great poet could not spell, we should not consider such a defect as in any way taking from his poetical rank. Neither is there anything particularly belonging to architecture, as such, which it is any credit to an artist to observe or represent; it is only a

simple and clear field for the manifestation of his knowledge of general laws. Any surveyor or engineer could have drawn the steps and balustrade in the Hero and Leander, as well as Turner has; but there is no man living but himself who could have thrown the accidental shadows upon them. I may, however, refer for general illustration of Turner's power as an architectural draughtsman, to the front of Rouen Cathedral, engraved in the Rivers of France, and to the Ely in the England. I know nothing in art which can be set beside the former of these for overwhelming grandeur and simplicity of effect, and inexhaustible intricacy of parts. I have then only a few remarks farther to offer respecting the general character of all those truths which we have been hitherto endeavouring to explain and illustrate.

§ 2. Extreme difficulty of illustrating or explaining the highest truth.

The difference in the accuracy of the lines of the Torso of the Vatican, (the Maestro of M. Angelo,) from those in one of M. Angelo's finest works, could perhaps scarcely be appreciated by any eye or feeling undisciplined by the most perfect and practical anatomical knowledge. It rests on points of such traceless and refined delicacy, that though we feel them in the result, we cannot follow them in the details. Yet they are such and so great as to place the Torso alone in art, solitary and supreme; while the finest of M. Angelo's works, considered with respect to truth alone, are said to be only on a level with antiques of the second class, under the Apollo and Venus, that is, two classes or grades below the Torso. But suppose the best sculptor in the world, possessing the most entire appreciation of the excellence of the Torso, were to sit down, pen in hand, to try and tell us wherein the peculiar truth of each line consisted? Could any words that he could use make us feel the hair's-breadth of depth and distance on which all depends? or end in anything more than bare assertions of the inferiority of this line to that, which, if we did not perceive for ourselves, no explanation could ever illustrate to us? He might as well endeavour to explain to us by words some taste or other subject of sense, of which we had no experience. And so it is with all truths of the highest order; they are separated from those of average precision by points of extreme delicacy, which none but the cultivated eye can in the least feel, and to express which, all words are

absolutely meaningless and useless. Consequently, in all that I have been saying of the truth of artists, I have been able to point out only coarse, broad, and explicable matters; I have been perfectly unable to express (and indeed I have made no endeavour to express) the finely drawn and distinguished truth in which all the real excellence of art consists. All those truths which I have been able to explain and demonstrate in Turner, are such as any artist of ordinary powers of observation ought to be capable of rendering. It is disgraceful to omit them; but it is no very great credit to observe them. I have indeed proved that they have been neglected, and disgracefully so, by those men who are commonly considered the Fathers of Art; but in showing that they have been observed by Turner, I have only proved him to be *above* other men in knowledge of truth, I have not given any conception of his own positive rank as a Painter of Nature. But it stands to reason, that the men, who in broad, simple, and demonstrable matters are perpetually violating truth, will not be particularly accurate or careful in carrying out delicate and refined, and undemonstrable matters; and it stands equally to reason, that the man who, as far as argument or demonstration can go, is found invariably truthful, will, in all probability, be truthful to the last line, and shadow of a line. And such is, indeed, the case with every touch of this consummate artist; the essential excellence—all that constitutes the real and exceeding value of his works—is beyond and above expression; it is a truth inherent in every line, and breathing in every hue, too delicate and exquisite to admit of any kind of proof, nor to be ascertained except by the highest of tests—the keen feeling attained by extended knowledge and long study. Two lines are laid on canvass; one is right and another wrong. There is no difference between them appreciable by the compasses—none appreciable by the ordinary eye—none which can be pointed out, if it is not seen. One person feels it,—another does not; but the feeling or sight of the one can by no words be communicated to the other: it would be unjust if it could, for that feeling and sight have been the reward of years of labour. And there is, indeed, nothing in Turner—not one dot nor line

§ 3. The *positive* rank of Turner is in no degree shown in the foregoing pages, but only his relative rank.

§ 4. The exceeding refinement of his truth.

—whose meaning can be understood without knowledge; because he never aims at sensual impressions, but at the deep final truth, which only meditation can discover, and only experience recognize. There is nothing done or omitted by him, which does not imply such a comparison of ends, such rejection of the least worthy, (as far as they are incompatible with the rest,) such careful selection and arrangement of all that can be united, as can only be enjoyed by minds capable of going through the same process, and discovering the reasons for the choice. And, as there is nothing in his works which can be enjoyed without knowledge, so there is nothing in them which knowledge will not enable us to enjoy. There is no test of our acquaintance with Nature so absolute and unfailing as the degree of admiration we feel for Turner's painting. Precisely as we are shallow in our knowledge, vulgar in our feeling, and contracted in our views of principles, will the works of this artist be stumbling blocks or foolishness to us:—precisely in the degree in which we are familiar with Nature, constant in our observation of her, and enlarged in our understanding of her, will they expand before our eyes into glory and beauty. In every new insight which we obtain into the works of God, in every new idea which we receive from His creation, we shall find ourselves possessed of an interpretation and a guide to something in Turner's works which we had not before understood. We may range over Europe, from shore to shore; and from every rock that we tread upon, every sky that passes over our heads, every local form of vegetation or of soil, we shall receive fresh illustration of his principles—fresh confirmation of his facts. We shall feel, wherever we go, that he has been there before us—whatever we see, that he has seen and seized before us: and we shall at last cease the investigation, with a well-grounded trust, that whatever we have been unable to account for, and what we still dislike in his works, has reason for it, and foundation like the rest; and that even where he has failed or erred, there is a beauty in the failure which none are able to equal, and a dignity in the error which none are worthy to reprove.

§ 5. There is nothing in his works which can be enjoyed without knowledge.

§ 6. And nothing which knowledge will not enable us to enjoy.

There has been marked and constant progress in his

mind; he has not, like some few artists, been without childhood; his course of study has been as evidently as it has been swiftly progressive, and in different stages of the struggle, sometimes one order of truth, sometimes another, has been aimed at or omitted. But from the beginning to the present height of his career, he has never sacrificed a greater truth to a less. As he advanced, the previous knowledge or attainment was absorbed in what succeeded, or abandoned only if incompatible, and never abandoned without a gain; and his present works present the sum and perfection of his accumulated knowledge, delivered with the impatience and passion of one who feels too much, and knows too much, and has too little time to say it in, to pause for expression, or ponder over his syllables. There is in them the obscurity, but the truth, of prophecy; the instinctive and burning language, which would express less if it uttered more, which is indistinct only by its fulness, and dark with its abundant meaning. He feels now, with long-trained vividness and keenness of sense, too bitterly the impotence of the hand, and the vainness of the colour to catch one shadow or one image of the glory which God has revealed to him. He has dwelt and communed with Nature all the days of his life; he knows her now too well, he cannot palter over the material littleness of her outward form; he must give her soul, or he has done nothing, and he cannot do this with the flax, and the earth, and the oil. "I cannot gather the sunbeams out of the east, or I would make *them* tell you what I have seen; but read this, and interpret this, and let us remember together. I cannot gather the gloom out of the night sky, or I would make that teach you what I have seen; but read this, and interpret this, and let us feel together. And if you have not that within you which I can summon to my aid, if you have not the sun in your spirit, and the passion in your heart, which my words may awaken, though they be indistinct and swift, leave me; for I will give you no patient mockery, no laborious insult of that glorious Nature, whose I am and whom I serve. Let other servants imitate the voice and the gesture of their master, while they forget his message. Hear that message from me; but remember, that the teaching of Divine truth must still be a mystery."

§ 7. His former rank and progress.

§ 8. Standing of his present works. Their mystery is the consequence of their fulness.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION.—MODERN ART AND MODERN CRITICISM

We have only, in conclusion, to offer a few general remarks respecting modern art and modern criticism.

We wish, in the first place, to remove the appearance of invidiousness and partiality which the constant prominence given in the present portion of the work to the productions of one artist, can scarcely fail of bearing in the minds of most readers. When we pass to the examination of what is beautiful and expressive in art, we shall frequently find distinctive qualities in the minds even of inferior artists, which have led them to the pursuit and embodying of particular trains of thought, altogether different from those which direct the compositions of other men, and incapable of comparison with them. Now, when this is the case, we should consider it in the highest degree, both invidious and illogical, to say of such different modes of exertion of the intellect, that one is in all points greater or nobler than another. We shall probably find something in the working of all minds which has an end and a power peculiar to itself, and which is deserving of free and full admiration, without any reference whatsoever to what has, in other fields, been accomplished by other modes of thought, and directions of aim. We shall, indeed, find a wider range and grasp in one man than in another; but yet it will be our own fault if we do not discover something in the most limited range of mind which is different from, and in its way better than, anything presented to us by the more grasping intellect. We all know that the nightingale sings more nobly than the lark; but who, therefore, would wish the lark not to sing, or would deny that it had a character of its own, which bore a part among the melodies of creation no less essential than that of the more richly-gifted bird? And thus we shall find and feel that whatever difference may exist between the intellectual powers of one artist and another,

§ 1. The entire prominence hitherto given to the works of one artist caused only by our not being able to take cognizance of *character*.

§ 2. The feelings of different artists are incapable of full comparison.

yet wherever there is any true genius, there will be some peculiar lesson which even the humblest will teach us more sweetly and perfectly than those far above them in prouder attributes of mind; and we should be as mistaken as we should be unjust and invidious, if we refused to receive this their peculiar message with gratitude and veneration, merely because it was a sentence and not a volume. But the case is different when we examine their relative fidelity to given facts. That fidelity depends on no peculiar modes of thought or habits of character; it is the result of keen sensibility, combined with high powers of memory and association. These qualities, as such, are the same in all men; character or feeling may direct their choice to this or that object, but the fidelity with which they treat either the one or the other, is dependent on those simple powers of sense and intellect which are like and comparable in all, and of which we can always say that they are greater in this man, or less in that without reference to the character of the individual. Those feelings which direct Cox to the painting of wild, weedy banks, and cool, melting skies, and those which directed Barret to the painting of glowing foliage and melancholy twilight, are both just and beautiful in their way, and are both worthy of high praise and gratitude, without necessity, nay, without *proper* possibility of comparing one with the other. But the degree of fidelity with which the leaves of the one and the light of the other are rendered, depends upon faculties of sight, sense, and memory common to both, and perfectly comparable; and we may say fearlessly, and without injustice, that one or the other, as the case may be, is more faithful in that which they have chosen to represent. It is also to be remembered that these faculties of sense and memory are not partial in their effect; they will not induce fidelity in the rendering of one class of objects, and fail of doing so in another. They act equally, and with equal results, whatever may be the matter subjected to them; the same delicate sense which perceives the utmost grace of the fibres of a tree, will be equally unerring in tracing the character of cloud; and the quick memory which seizes and retains the circumstances of a flying effect of shadow or colour, will be equally effectual

§3. But the fidelity and truth of each are capable of real comparison.

§4. Especially because they are equally manifested in the treatment of all subjects.

in fixing the impression of the instantaneous form of a moving figure or a breaking wave. There are indeed one or two broad distinctions in the nature of the senses,—a sensibility to colour, for instance, being very different from a sensibility to form; so that a man may possess one without the other, and an artist may succeed in mere imitation of what is before him, of air, sunlight, etc., without possessing sensibility at all. But wherever we have, in the drawing of any one object, sufficient evidence of real intellectual power of the sense which perceives the essential qualities of a thing, and the judgment which arranges them so as to illustrate each other, we may be quite certain that the same sense and judgment will operate equally on whatever is subjected to them, and that the artist will be equally great and masterly in his drawing of all that he attempts. Hence we may be quite sure that wherever an artist appears to be truthful in one branch of art, and not in another, the apparent truth is either owing to some trickery of imitation, or is not so great as we suppose it to be. In nine cases out of ten, people who are celebrated for drawing only one thing, and *can* only draw one thing, draw that one thing worse than anybody else. An artist may indeed confine himself to a limited range of subject, but if he be really true in his rendering of this, his power of doing more will be perpetually showing itself in accessaries and minor points. There are few men, for instance, more limited in subject than Hunt, and yet I do not think there is another man in the old Water-Colour Society, with so keen an eye for truth, or with power so universal. And this is the reason for the exceeding prominence which in the foregoing investigation one or two artists have always assumed over the rest, for the habits of accurate observation and delicate powers of hand which they possess, have equal effect, and maintain the same superiority in their works, to whatever class of subject they may be directed. And thus we have been compelled, however unwillingly, to pass hastily by the works of many gifted men, because, however pure their feeling, or original their conceptions, they were wanting in those faculties of the hand and mind which insure perfect fidelity to nature: it will be only hereafter, when we are at liberty to take full cognizance of the thought, however

§ 5. No man draws one thing well, if he can draw nothing else.

feebly it may be clothed in language, that we shall be able to do real justice to the disciples either of modern or of ancient art.

But as far as we have gone at present, and with respect only to the *material* truth, which is all that we have been able to investigate, the conclusion to which we must be led is as clear as it is inevitable; that modern artists, as a body, are far more just and full in their views of material things than any landscape painters whose works are extant—but that J. M. W. Turner is the only man who has ever given an entire transcript of the whole system of nature, and is, in this point of view, the only perfect landscape painter whom the world has ever seen.

§ 6. General conclusions to be derived from our past investigation.

Nor are we disposed to recede from our assertion made in Sec. I. Ch. I. § 10, that this material truth is indeed a perfect test of the relative rank of painters, though it does not in itself constitute that rank. We shall be able to prove that truth and beauty, knowledge and imagination, invariably are associated in art; and we shall be able to show that not only in truth to nature, but in all other points, Turner is the greatest landscape painter who has ever lived. But his superiority is, in matters of feeling, one of kind, not of degree. Superiority of degree implies a superseding of others, superiority of kind only sustaining a more important, but not more necessary part, than others. If *truth* were all that we required from art, all other painters might cast aside their brushes in despair, for all that they have done he has done more fully and accurately; but when we pass to the higher requirements of art, beauty and character, their contributions are all equally necessary and desirable, because different, and however inferior in position or rank, are still perfect of their kind; their inferiority is only that of the lark to the nightingale, or of the violet to the rose.

§ 7. Truth, a standard of all excellence.

Such then is the rank and standing of our modern artists. We have, living with us, and painting for us, the greatest painter of *all* time; a man with whose supremacy of power no intellect of past ages can be put in comparison for a moment. Let us next inquire what is the rank of our critics. Public taste, I believe, as far as it is the

§ 8. Modern criticism. Changefulness of public taste.

encourager and supporter of art has been the same in all ages,—a fitful and vacillating current of vague impression, perpetually liable to change, subject to epidemic desires, and agitated by infectious passion, the slave of fashion, and the fool of fancy, but yet always distinguishing with singular clearsightedness, between that which is best and that which is worst of the particular class of food which its morbid appetite may call for; never failing to distinguish that which is produced by intellect, from that which is not, though it may be intellect degraded by ministering to its misguided will. Public taste may thus degrade a race of men capable of the highest efforts in art into the portrait painters of ephemeral fashions, but it will yet not fail of discovering who, among these portrait painters, is the man of most mind. It will separate the man who would have become Buonaroti from the man who would have become Bandinelli, though it will employ both in painting curls, and feathers, and bracelets. Hence, generally speaking, there is no *comparative* injustice done, no false elevation of the fool above the man of mind, provided only that the man of mind will condescend to supply the particular article which the public chooses to want. Of course a thousand modifying circumstances interfere with the action of the general rule, but, taking one case with another, we shall very constantly find the price which the picture commands in the market a pretty fair standard of the artist's rank of intellect. The press, therefore, and all who pretend to lead the public taste, have not so much to direct the multitude whom to go to, as what to ask for. Their business is not to tell us which is our best painter, but to tell us whether we are making our best painter do his best.

§ 9. Yet associated with a certain degree of judgment.

§ 10. Duty of the press.

Now none are capable of doing this, but those whose principles of judgment are based both on thorough *practical* knowledge of art, and on broad general views of what is true and right, without reference to what has been done at one time or another, or in one school or another. Nothing can be more perilous to the cause of art, than the constant ringing in our painters' ears of the names

§ 11. Qualifications necessary for discharging it.

of great predecessors, as their examples or masters. I had rather hear a great poet, entirely original in his feeling and aim, rebuked or maligned for not being like Wordsworth or Coleridge, than a great painter criticised for not putting us in mind of Claude or Poussin. But such references to former excellence are the only refuge and resource of persons endeavouring to be critics without being artists. They cannot tell you whether a thing is right or not; but they can tell you whether it is like something else or not. And the whole tone of modern criticism—as far as it is worthy of being called criticism—sufficiently shows it to proceed entirely from persons altogether unversed in practice, and ignorant of truth, but possessing just enough of feeling to enjoy the solemnity of ancient art, who, not distinguishing that which is really exalted and valuable in the modern school, nor having any just idea of the real ends or capabilities of landscape art, consider nothing right which is not based on the conventional principles of the ancients, and nothing true which has more of nature in it than of Claude. But it is strange that while the noble and unequalled works of modern landscape painters are thus maligned and misunderstood, our historical painters—such as we have—are permitted to pander more fatally every year to the vicious English taste, which can enjoy nothing but what is theatrical, entirely unchastised, nay, encouraged and lauded by the very men who endeavour to hamper our great landscape painters with rules derived from consecrated blunders. The very critic who has just passed one of the noblest works of Turner—that is to say, a masterpiece of art, to which Time can show no parallel—with a ribald jest, will yet stand gaping in admiration before the next piece of dramatic glitter and grimace, suggested by the society, and adorned with the appurtenances of the green room, which he finds hung low upon the wall as a brilliant example of the ideal of English art. It is natural enough indeed, that the persons who are disgusted by what is pure and noble, should be delighted with what is vicious and degraded; but it is singular that those who are constantly talking of Claude and Poussin, should never even pretend to a thought of Raffaelle. We could excuse them for not

§ 12. General incapability of modern critics.

§ 13. And inconsistency with themselves.

comprehending Turner, if they only would apply the same cut-and-dried criticisms where they might be applied with truth, and productive of benefit; but we endure not the paltry compound of ignorance, false taste, and pretension, which assumes the dignity of classical feeling, that it may be able to abuse whatever is above the level of its understanding, but bursts into genuine rapture with all that is meretricious, if sufficiently adapted to the calibre of its comprehension.

To notice such criticisms, however, is giving them far more importance than they deserve. They can lead none astray but those whose opinions are absolutely valueless, and we did not begin this chapter with any intent of wasting our time on these small critics, but in the hope of pointing out to the periodical press what kind of criticism is now most required by our school of landscape art, and how it may be in their power, if they will, to regulate its impulses, without checking its energies, and really to advance both the cause of the artist, and the taste of the public.

§ 14. How the press may really advance the cause of art.

One of the most morbid symptoms of the general taste of the present day, is a too great fondness for unfinished works. Brilliancy and rapidity of execution are everywhere sought as the highest good, and so that a picture be cleverly handled as far as it is carried, little regard is paid to its imperfection as a whole. Hence some artists are permitted, and others compelled, to confine themselves to a manner of working altogether destructive of their powers, and to tax their energies, not to concentrate the greatest quantity of thought on the least possible space of canvass, but to produce the greatest quantity of glitter and clap-trap in the shortest possible time. To the idler and the trickster in art, no system can be more advantageous; but to the man who is really desirous of doing something worth having lived for—to a man of industry, energy, or feeling, we believe it to be the cause of the most bitter discouragement. If ever, working upon a favourite subject or a beloved idea, he is induced to tax his powers to the utmost, and to spend as much time upon his picture as he feels necessary for its perfection, he will not be able to get so high a price for the result, perhaps, of a twelvemonth's thought, as he might have obtained for

§ 15. Morbid fondness at the present day for unfinished works;

half-a-dozen sketches with a forenoon's work in each, and he is compelled either to fall back upon mechanism, or to starve. Now the press should especially endeavour to convince the public, that by this purchase of imperfect pictures they not only prevent all progress and development of high talent, and set tricksters and mechanics on a level with men of mind, but defraud and injure themselves. For there is no doubt whatever, that, estimated merely by the quantity of pleasure it is capable of conveying, a well-finished picture is worth to its possessor half-a-dozen incomplete ones; and that a perfect drawing is, simply as a source of delight, better worth a hundred guineas than a drawing half as finished is worth thirty. On the other hand, the body of our artists should be kept in mind, that by indulging the public with rapid and unconsidered work, they are not only depriving themselves of the benefit which each picture ought to render to them, as a piece of practice and study, but they are destroying the refinement of general taste, and rendering it impossible for themselves ever to find a market for more careful works, supposing that they were inclined to execute them. Nor need any single artist be afraid of setting the example, and producing laboured works, at advanced prices, among the cheap, quick drawings of the day. The public will soon find the value of the complete work, and will be more ready to give a large sum for that which is inexhaustible, than a quota of it for that which they are wearied of in a month. The artist who never lets the price command the picture, will soon find the picture command the price. And it ought to be a rule with every painter never to let a picture leave his easel while it is yet capable of improvement, or of having more thought put into it. The general effect is often perfect and pleasing, and not to be improved upon, when the details and facts are altogether imperfect and unsatisfactory. It may be difficult—perhaps the most difficult task of art—to complete these details, and not to hurt the general effect; but until the artist can do this, his art is imperfect and his picture unfinished. That only is a complete picture which has both the general wholeness and effect of nature, and the inexhaustible perfection of nature's details. And it is only

§ 16. By which the public defraud themselves;

§ 17. And in pandering to which, artists ruin themselves.

§ 18. Necessity of finishing works of art perfectly.

in the effort to unite these that a painter really improves. By aiming only at details, he becomes a mechanic; by aiming only at generals, he becomes a trickster: his fall in both cases is sure. Two questions the artist has, therefore, always to ask himself,—first, "Is my whole right?" Secondly, "Can my details be added to? Is there a single space in the picture where I can crowd in another thought? Is there a curve in it which I can modulate—a line which I can graduate—a vacancy I can fill? Is there a single spot which the eye, by any peering or prying, can fathom or exhaust? If so, my picture is imperfect; and if, in modulating the line or filling the vacancy, I hurt the general effect, my art is imperfect."

§ 19. *Sketches* not sufficiently encouraged.

But, on the other hand, though incomplete pictures ought neither to be produced nor purchased, careful and real *sketches* ought to be valued much more highly than they are. Studies in chalk, of landscape, should form a part of every Exhibition, and a room should be allotted to drawings and designs of figures in the Academy. We should be heartily glad to see the room which is now devoted to bad drawings of incorporeal and imaginary architecture—of things which never were, and which, thank Heaven! never will be—occupied instead, by careful studies for historical pictures; not blots of chiaroscuro, but delicate outlines with the pen or crayon.

§ 20. Brilliancy of execution or efforts at invention not to be tolerated in young artists.

From young artists, in landscape, nothing ought to be tolerated but simple *bona fide imitation* of nature. They have no business to ape the execution of masters,—to utter weak and disjointed repetitions of other men's words, and mimick the gestures of the preacher, without understanding his meaning or sharing in his emotions. We do not want their crude ideas of composition, their unformed conceptions of the Beautiful, their unsystematized experiments upon the Sublime. We scorn their velocity; for it is without direction: we reject their decision; for it is without grounds: we contemn their composition; for it is without materials: we reprobate their choice; for it is without comparison. Their duty is neither to choose, nor compose, nor imagine, nor experimentalize; but to be humble and earnest in following the steps of Nature, and tracing the finger of God. Nothing is so bad a symptom,

in the work of young artists, as too much dexterity of handling; for it is a sign that they are satisfied with their work, and have tried to do nothing more than they were able to do. Their work should be full of failures; for these are the signs of efforts. They should keep to quiet colours—greys and browns; and, making the early works of Turner their example, as his latest are to be their object of emulation, should go to Nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate her meaning, and remember her instruction, rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, and scorning nothing; believing all things to be right and good, and rejoicing always in the truth. Then, when their memories are stored, and their imaginations fed, and their hands firm, let them take up the scarlet and the gold, give the reins to their fancy, and show us what their heads are made of. We will follow them wherever they choose to lead; we will check at nothing; they are then our masters, and are fit to be so. They have placed themselves above our criticism, and we will listen to their words in all faith and humility; but not unless they themselves have before bowed, in the same submission, to a higher Authority and Master.

§ 21. The duty and after privileges of all students.

Among our greater artists, the chief want, at the present day, is that of *solemnity* and definite purpose. We have too much picture-manufacturing, too much making up of lay figures with a certain quantity of foliage, and a certain quantity of sky, and a certain quantity of water,—a little bit of all that is pretty, a little sun, and a little shade,—a touch of pink, and a touch of blue,—a little sentiment, and a little sublimity, and a little humour, and a little antiquarianism, —all very neatly associated in a very charming picture, but not working together for a definite end. Or if the aim be higher, as was the case with Barret and Varley, we are generally put off with stale repetitions of eternal composition; a great tree, and some goats, and a bridge and a lake, and the temple at Tivoli, &c. Now we should like to see our artists working out, with all exertion of their concentrated powers such marked pieces of landscape character as might bear upon them the impression of solemn, earnest, and pervading thought, definitely directed, and aided by every accessory of

§ 22. Necessity among our greater artists of more singleness of aim.

detail, colour, and idealized form, which the disciplined feeling, accumulated knowledge, and unspared labour of the painter could supply. I have alluded, in the second preface, to the deficiency of our modern artists in these great points of earnestness and completeness; and I revert to it, in conclusion, as their paramount failing, and one fatal in many ways to the interests of art. Our landscapes are all descriptive, not reflective; agreeable and conversational, but not impressive nor didactic. They have no other foundation than

> "That vivacious versatility,
> Which many people take for want of heart.
> They err; 'tis merely what is called 'mobility;'
> A thing of temperament, and *not of art*,
> *Though seeming so from its supposed facility.*
> . . . . . .
> This makes your actors, *artists*, and romancers;
> Little that's great—but much of what is clever."

Only it is to be observed that—in painters—this vivacity is *not* always versatile. It is to be wished that it were, but it is no such easy matter to be versatile in painting. Shallowness of thought insures not its variety, nor rapidity of production its originality. Whatever may be the case in literature, facility is in art inconsistent with invention. The artist who covers most canvass always shows, even in the sum of his works, the least expenditure of thought.[1] I have never seen more than four works of John Lewis on the walls of the Water-Colour Exhibition; I have counted forty from other hands; but have found in the end that the forty were a multiplication of one, and the four a concentration of forty. And therefore I would earnestly plead with all our artists, that they should make it a law *never* to repeat themselves; for he who never repeats himself will not produce an inordinate number of pictures, and he who limits himself in number gives himself at least the opportunity of completion. Besides, all repetition is degradation of the art; it reduces it from headwork to handwork; and indicates something like a persuasion on the part of the artist that nature is exhaustible

[1] Of course this assertion does not refer to the differences in mode of execution, which enable one painter to work faster or slower than another, but only to the exertion of mind, commonly manifested by the artist, according as he is sparing or prodigal of production.

or art perfectible; perhaps, even, by him exhausted and perfected. All copyists are contemptible, but the copyist of himself the most so, for he has the worst original.

Let then every picture be painted with earnest intention of impressing on the spectator some elevated emotion, and exhibiting to him some one particular, but exalted, beauty. Let a real subject be carefully selected, in itself suggestive of, and replete with, this feeling and beauty; let an effect of light and colour be taken which may harmonize with both; and a sky, not invented, but recollected, (in fact, all so-called invention is in landscape nothing more than appropriate recollection—good in proportion as it is distinct). Then let the details of the foreground be separately studied, especially those plants which appear peculiar to the place: if any one, however unimportant, occurs there, which occurs not elsewhere, it should occupy a prominent position; for the other details, the highest examples of the ideal forms[1] or characters which he

§ 23. What should be their general aim.

[1] "Talk of improving nature when it *is* nature—Nonsense."—*E. V. Rippingille.* I have not yet spoken of the difference—even in what we commonly call Nature—between imperfect and ideal form: the study of this difficult question must, of course, be deferred until we have examined the nature of our impressions of beauty; but it may not be out of place here to hint at the want of care in many of our artists to distinguish between the real work of nature and the diseased results of man's interference with her. Many of the works of our greatest artists have for their subjects nothing but hacked and hewn remnants of farm-yard vegetation, branded root and branch, from their birth, by the prong and the pruning-hook; and the feelings once accustomed to take pleasure in such abortions, can scarcely become perceptive of forms truly ideal. I have just said (p. 151) that young painters should go to nature trustingly,—rejecting nothing, and selecting nothing: so they should; but they must be careful that it *is* nature to whom they go—nature in her liberty—not as servant-of-all-work in the hands of the agriculturist, nor stiffened into court-dress by the landscape gardener. It must be the pure, wild volition and energy of the creation which they follow—not subdued to the furrow, and cicatrized to the pollard—not persuaded into proprieties, nor pampered into diseases. Let them work by the torrent-side, and in the forest shadows; not by purling brooks and under "tonsile shades." It is impossible to enter here into discussion of what man can or cannot do, by assisting natural operations: it is an intricate question: nor can I, without anticipating what I shall have hereafter to advance, show how or why it happens that the race-horse is *not* the artist's ideal of a horse, nor a prize tulip his ideal of a flower; but so it is. As far as the painter is concerned, man never touches nature but to spoil;—he operates on her as a barber would on the Apollo; and if he sometimes increases some particular power or excellence,—strength or agility in the

requires are to be selected by the artist from his former studies, or fresh studies made expressly for the purpose, leaving as little as possible—nothing, in fact, beyond their connection and arrangement—to mere imagination. Finally, when his picture is thus perfectly realized in all its parts, let him dash as much of it out as he likes; throw, if he will, mist around it—darkness—or dazzling and confused light—whatever, in fact, impetuous feeling or vigorous imagination may dictate or desire; the forms, once so laboriously realized, will come out whenever they *do* occur with a startling and impressive truth, which the uncertainty in which they are veiled will enhance rather than diminish; and the imagination, strengthened by discipline and fed with truth, will achieve the utmost of creation that is possible to finite mind.

The artist who thus works will soon find that he cannot repeat himself if he would; that new fields of exertion, new subjects of contemplation open to him in nature day by day, and that, while others lament the weakness of their invention, *he* has nothing to lament but the shortness of life.

And now but one word more, respecting the great artist whose works have formed the chief subject of this treatise. All the *greatest* qualities of those works—all that is mental in them, has not yet been so much as touched upon. None but their lightest and least essential excellences have been

animal—tallness, or fruitfulness, or solidity in the tree,—he invariably loses that *balance* of good qualities which is the chief sign of perfect specific form; above all, he destroys the appearance of free *volition* and *felicity*, which, as I shall show hereafter, is one of the essential characters of organic beauty. Until, however, I can enter into the discussion of the nature of beauty, the only advice I can safely give the young painter, is to keep clear of clover-fields and parks, and to hold to the unpenetrated forest and the unfurrowed hill. There he will find that every influence is noble, even when destructive—that decay itself is beautiful,—and that, in the elaborate and lovely composition of all things, if at first sight it seems less studied than the works of men, the appearance of Art is only prevented by the presence of Power.

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.

WORDSWORTH.

proved, and, therefore, the enthusiasm with which I speak of them must necessarily appear overcharged and absurd. It might, perhaps, have been more prudent to have withheld the full expression of it till I had shown the full grounds for it; but once written, such expression must remain till I have justified it. And, indeed, I think there is enough, even in the foregoing pages, to show that these works are, as far as concerns the ordinary critics of the press, above all animadversion, and above all praise; and that, by the public, they are not to be received as in any way subjects or matters of opinion, but of Faith. We are not to approach them to be pleased, but to be taught; not to form a judgment, but to receive a lesson. Our periodical writers, therefore, may save themselves the trouble either of blaming or praising: their duty is not to pronounce opinions upon the work of a man who has walked with nature threescore years; but to impress upon the public the respect with which they are to be received, and to make request to him, on the part of the people of England, that he would now touch no unimportant work—that he would not spend time on slight or small pictures, but give to the nation a series of grand, consistent, systematic, and completed poems. We desire that he should follow out his own thoughts and intents of heart, without reference to any human authority. But we request, in all humility, that those thoughts may be seriously and loftily given; and that the whole power of his unequalled intellect may be exerted in the production of such works as may remain for ever for the teaching of the nations. In all that he says, we believe; in all that he does, we trust.[1] It is

§ 24. Duty of the press with respect to the works of Turner.

[1] It has been hinted, in some of the reviews of the Second Volume of this work, that the writer's respect for Turner has diminished since the above passage was written. He would, indeed, have been deserving of little attention if, with the boldness manifested on the preceding pages, he had advanced opinions based on so shallow foundation as that the course of three years could effect modification on them. He was justified by the sudden accession of power which the great artist exhibited at the period when this volume was first published, as well as by the low standard of the criticism to which he was subjected, in claiming, with respect to his then works, a submission of judgment, greater indeed than may generally be accorded to even the highest human intellect, yet not greater than such a master might legitimately claim from such critics; and the cause of the peculiar form of advocacy into which the preceding chapters necessarily fell, has been already stated more than once. In

therefore that we pray him to utter nothing lightly—to do nothing regardlessly. He stands upon an eminence, from which he looks back over the universe of God, and forward over the generations of men. Let every work of his hand be a history of the one, and a lesson to the other. Let each exertion of his mighty mind be both hymn and prophecy,—adoration to the Deity,—revelation to mankind.

the following sections it became necessary as they treated a subject of intricate relations, and peculiar difficulty, to obtain a more general view of the scope and operation of art, and to avoid all conclusions in any wise referable to the study of particular painters. The reader will therefore find, not that lower rank is attributed to Turner, but that he is now compared with the greatest men, and occupies his true position among the most noble of all time.

PART III

OF IDEAS OF BEAUTY

SECTION I

OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY

CHAPTER I

OF THE RANK AND RELATIONS OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY

ALTHOUGH the hasty execution and controversial tone of the former portions of this essay have been subjects of frequent regret to the writer, yet the one was in some measure excusable in a work referred to a temporary end, and the other unavoidable, in one directed against particular opinions. Nor are either of any necessary detriment to its availableness as a foundation for more careful and extended survey, in so far as its province was confined to the assertion of obvious and visible facts, the verification of which could in no degree be dependent either on the care with which they might be classed, or the temper in which they were regarded. Not so with respect to the investigation now before us, which, being not of things outward, and sensibly demonstrable, but of the value and meaning of mental impressions, must be entered upon with a modesty and cautiousness proportioned to the difficulty of determining the likeness, or community, of such impressions, as they are received by different men, and with seriousness proportioned to the importance of rightly regarding those faculties over which we have moral power, and therefore in relation to which we assuredly incur a moral responsibility. There is not the thing left to the choice of man to do or not to do, but there is some sort or degree of duty involved in his determination; and by how much the more, therefore, our subject becomes embarrassed by the cross influences of variously admitted passion, administered discipline, or en-

§ 1. With what care the subject is to be approached.

couraged affection, upon the minds of men, by so much the more it becomes matter of weight and import to observe by what laws we should be guided, and of what responsibilities regardful, in all that we admit, administer, or encourage.

§ 2. And of what importance considered.

Nor indeed have I ever, even in the preceding sections, spoken with levity, though sometimes perhaps with rashness. I have never treated the subject as other than demanding heedful and serious examination, and taking high place among those which justify as they reward our utmost ardour and earnestness of pursuit. That it justifies them must be my present task to prove; that it demands them has never been doubted. Art, properly so called, is no recreation, it cannot be learned at spare moments, nor pursued when we have nothing better to do. It is no handiwork for drawing-room tables; no relief of the ennui of boudoirs; it must be understood and undertaken seriously or not at all. To advance it men's lives must be given, and to receive it their hearts. "Le peintre Rubens s'amuse à être ambassadeur," said one with whom, but for his own words, we might have thought that effort had been absorbed in power, and the labour of his art in its felicity.—"È faticoso lo studio della pittura, et sempre si fa il mare maggiore," said he, who of all men was least likely to have left us discouraging report of anything that majesty of intellect could grasp, or continuity of labour overcome.[1] But that this labour, the necessity of which in all ages has been most frankly admitted by the greatest men, is justifiable in a moral point of view, that it is not the pouring out of men's lives upon the ground, that it has functions of usefulness addressed to the weightiest of human interests, and that the objects of it have calls upon us which it is inconsistent alike with our human dignity and our heavenward duty to disobey—has never been boldly asserted nor fairly admitted; least of all is it likely to be so in these days of despatch and display, where vanity, on the one side, supplies the place of that love of art which is the only effective patronage, and on the other, of the incorruptible and earnest pride which no applause, no reprobation, can blind to its shortcomings, nor beguile of its hope.

And yet it is in the expectation of obtaining at least a partial acknowledgment of this, as a truth influential both of

[1] Tintoret. (Ridolfi. Vita.)

aim and conduct, that I enter upon the second division of my subject. The time I have already devoted to the task I should have considered altogether inordinate, and that which I fear may be yet required for its completion would have been cause to me of utter discouragement, but that the object I propose to myself is of no partial nor accidental importance. It is not now to distinguish between disputed degrees of ability in individuals, or agreeableness in canvasses, it is not now to expose the ignorance or defend the principles of party or person. It is to summon the moral energies of the nation to a forgotten duty, to display the use, force, and function of a great body of neglected sympathies and desires, and to elevate to its healthy and beneficial operation that art which, being altogether addressed to them, rises or falls with their variableness of vigour,—now leading them with Tyrtæan fire, now singing them to sleep with baby murmurings.

§ 3. The doubtful force of the term "utility."

Only as I fear that with many of us the recommendation of our own favourite pursuits is rooted more in conceit of ourselves, than affection towards others, so that sometimes in our very pointing of the way, we had rather that the intricacy of it should be admired than unfolded, whence a natural distrust of such recommendation may well have place in the minds of those who have not yet perceived any value in the thing praised, and because, also, men in the present century understand the word Useful in a strange way, or at least (for the word has been often so accepted from the beginning of time) since in these days, they act its more limited meaning farther out, and give to it more practical weight and authority, it will be well in the outset, that I define exactly what kind of Utility I mean to attribute to art, and especially to that branch of it which is concerned with those impressions of external Beauty whose nature it is our present object to discover.

§ 4. Its proper sense.

That is to everything created, pre-eminently useful, which enables it rightly and fully to perform the functions appointed to it by its Creator. Therefore, that we may determine what is chiefly useful to man, it is necessary first to determine the use of Man himself.

Man's use and function (and let him who will not grant me this follow me no farther, for this I purpose always to

assume) is, to be the witness of the glory of God, and to advance that glory by his reasonable obedience and resultant happiness.

Whatever enables us to fulfil this function, is in the pure and first sense of the word Useful to us. Pre-eminently therefore whatever sets the glory of God more brightly before us. But things that only help us to exist, are in a secondary and mean sense, useful, or rather, if they be looked for alone, they are useless and worse, for it would be better that we should not exist, than that we should guiltily disappoint the purposes of existence.

§ 5. How falsely applied in these times.

And yet people speak in this working age, when they speak from their hearts, as if houses and lands, and food, and raiment, were alone useful, and as if Sight, Thought, and Admiration,[1] were all profitless, so that men insolently call themselves Utilitarians, who would turn, if they had their way, themselves and their race into vegetables; men who think, as far as such can be said to think, that the meat is more than the life, and the raiment than the body, who look to the earth as a stable, and to its fruit as fodder; vine dressers and husbandmen, who love the corn they grind, and the grapes they crush, better than the gardens of the Angels upon the slopes of Eden, hewers of wood and drawers of water, who think that the wood they hew and the water they draw, are better than the pine-forests that cover the mountains like the shadow of God, and than the great rivers that move like his eternity. And so comes upon us that Woe of the preacher, that though God "hath made everything beautiful in his time, also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."

§ 6. The evil consequences of such interpretation. How connected with national power.

This Nebuchadnezzar curse, that sends us to grass like oxen, seems to follow but too closely, on the excess or continuance of national power and peace. In the perplexities of nations, in their struggles for existence, in their infancy, their impotence, or even their disorganization, they have higher hopes and nobler passions. Out of the suffering comes the serious mind; out of the salvation, the grateful heart; out of the endurance, the

[1] "We live by admiration, hope, and love." EXCURSION, Book iv.

fortitude; out of the deliverance, the faith; but now when they have learned to live under providence of laws, and with decency and justice of regard for each other; and when they have done away with violent and external sources of suffering, worse evils seem arising out of their rest, evils that vex less and mortify more, that suck the blood though they do not shed it, and ossify the heart though they do not torture it. And deep though the causes of thankfulness must be to every people at peace with others and at unity in itself, there are causes of fear also, a fear greater than of sword and sedition, that dependence on God may be forgotten because the bread is given and the water sure, that gratitude to him may cease because his constancy of protection has taken the semblance of a natural law, that heavenly hope may grow faint amidst the full fruition of the world, that Selfishness may take place of undemanded devotion, compassion be lost in vain-glory, and love in dissimulation,[1] that enervation may succeed to strength, apathy to patience, and the noise of jesting words and foulness of dark thoughts, to the earnest purity of the girded loins and the burning lamp. About the river of human life there is a wintry wind, though a heavenly sunshine; the iris colours its agitation, the frost fixes upon its repose. Let us beware that our rest become not the rest of stones, which so long as they are torrent-tossed, and thunder-stricken, maintain their majesty, but when the stream is silent, and the storm passed, suffer the grass to cover them and the lichen to feed on them, and are ploughed down into dust.

§ 7. How to be averted.

And though I believe that we have salt enough of ardent and holy mind amongst us to keep us in some measure from this moral decay, yet the signs of it must be watched with anxiety, in all matter however trivial, in all directions however distant. And at this time, when the iron roads are tearing up the surface of Europe, as grapeshot do the sea, when their great sagene is drawing and twitching the ancient frame and strength of England together, contracting all its various life, its rocky arms and rural heart, into a narrow, finite, calculating metropolis of

[1] Rom. xii. 9.

manufactures, when there is not a monument throughout the cities of Europe, that speaks of old years and mighty people, but it is being swept away to build Cafés and gaming-houses[1]; when the honour of God is thought to consist in

[1] The extent of ravage among works of art, or of historical interest, continually committing throughout the continent may, perhaps, be in some measure estimated from the following facts, to which the experience of every traveller may add indefinitely :—

At Beauvois—The magnificent old houses supported on columns of workmanship (so far as I recollect) unique in the north of France, at the corner of the market-place, have recently been destroyed for the enlarging of some ironmongery and grocery warehouses. The arch across the street leading to the cathedral has been destroyed also, for what purpose I know not.

At Rouen—The last of the characteristic houses on the quay is now disappearing. When I was last there, I witnessed the destruction of the noble gothic portal of the church of St. Nicholas, whose position interfered with the courtyard of an hotel ; the greater part of the ancient churches are used as smithies, or warehouses for goods. So also at Tours (St. Julien). One of the most interesting and superb pieces of middle-age domestic architecture in Europe, opposite the west front of the cathedral, is occupied as a café, and its lower story concealed by painted wainscotings ; representing, if I recollect right, twopenny rolls surrounded by circles of admiring cherubs.

At Geneva—The wooden projections or loggias which were once the characteristic feature of the city, have been entirely removed within the last ten years.

At Pisa—The old Baptistery is at this present time in process of being "restored," that is, dashed to pieces, and common stone painted black and varnished, substituted for its black marble. In the Campo Santo, the invaluable frescoes, which might be protected by merely glazing the arcades, are left exposed to wind and weather. While I was there last year, I saw a monument put up against the lower part of the wall, to some private person ; the bricklayers knocked out a large space of the lower brickwork, with what beneficial effect to the loose and blistered stucco on which the frescoes are painted above, I leave the reader to imagine ; inserted the tablet, and then plastered over the marks of the insertion, destroying a portion of the border of one of the paintings. The greater part of Giotto's "Satan before God," has been destroyed by the recent insertion of one of the beams of the roof.

The tomb of Antonio Puccinello, which was the last actually put up against the frescoes, and which destroyed the terminal subject of the Giotto series, bears date 1808.

It has been proposed (or at least it is so reported), that the church of La Spina should be destroyed in order to widen the quay.

At Florence—One of its most important and characteristic streets, that in which stands the church of Or San Michele, has been within the last five years entirely destroyed and rebuilt in the French style ;

the poverty of his temple, and the column is shortened, and the pinnacle shattered, the colour denied to the casement, and the marble to the altar, while exchequers are exhausted in luxury of boudoirs, and pride of reception-rooms; when we ravage without a pause all the loveliness of creation which God in giving pronounced Good, and destroy without a thought all those labours which men have given their lives, and their sons' sons' lives to complete, and have left for a

consisting now almost exclusively of shops of Bijouterie and Parfumerie. Owing to this direction of public funds, the fronts of the Duomo, Santa Croce, San Lorenzo, and half the others in Florence remain in their original bricks.

The old refectory of Santa Croce, containing an invaluable Cenacolo, if not by Giotto, at least one of the finest works of his school, is used as a carpet manufactory. In order to see the fresco, I had to get on the top of a loom. The *cenacolo* (of Raffaelle?) recently discovered, I saw when the refectory it adorns was used as a coach-house. The fresco, which gave Raffaelle the idea of the Christ of the transfiguration, is in an old woodshed at San Miniato, concealed behind a heap of faggots. In June, last year, I saw Gentile da Fabriano's picture of the Adoration of the Magi, belonging to the Academy of Florence, put face upmost in a shower of rain in an open cart; on my suggesting the possibility of the rains hurting it, an old piece of matting was thrown over its face, and it was wheeled away "per essere pulita." What fate this signified is best to be discovered from the large Perugino in the Academy; whose divine distant landscape is now almost concealed by the mass of French ultramarine, painted over it apparently with a common house-brush, by the picture cleaner.

Not to detain the reader by going through the cities of Italy, I will only further mention, that at Padua, the rain beats through the west window of the Arena chapel, and runs down *over* the frescoes. That at Venice, in September last, I saw three buckets set in the scuola di San Rocco to catch the rain which came *through* the *canvasses* of Tintoret on the roof; and that while the old works of art are left thus unprotected, the palaces are being restored in the following modes. The English residents knock out bow windows to see up and down the canal. The Italians paint all the *marble* white or cream colour, stucco the fronts, and paint them in blue and white stripes to imitate alabaster. (This has been done with Danieli's hotel, with the north angle of the church of St. Mark, there replacing the real alabasters which have been torn down, with a noble old house in St. Mark's place, and with several in the narrow canals.) The marbles of St. Mark's, and carvings, are being *scraped* down to make them look bright—the lower arcade of the Doge's palace is whitewashed—the entrance porch is being restored—the operation having already proceeded so far as the knocking off of the heads of the old statues—an iron railing painted black and yellow has been put round the court. Faded tapestries, and lottery tickets (the latter for the benefit of charitable institutions), are exposed for sale in the council chambers.

legacy to all their kind, a legacy of more than their hearts' blood, for it is of their souls' travail, there is need, bitter need, to bring back, if we may, into men's minds, that to live is nothing, unless to live be to know him by whom we live, and that he is not to be known by marring his fair works, and blotting out the evidence of his influences upon his creatures, not amidst the hurry of crowds and crash of innovation, but in solitary places, and out of the glowing intelligences which he gave to men of old. He did not teach them how to build for glory and for beauty, he did not give them the fearless, faithful, inherited energies that worked on and down from death to death, generation after generation, that we, foul and sensual as we are, might give the carved work of their poured-out spirit to the axe and the hammer, he has not cloven the earth with rivers, that their white, wild waves might turn wheels and push paddles, nor turned it up under as it were fire, that it might heat wells and cure diseases; he brings not up his quails by the east-wind, only to let them fall in flesh about the camp of men, he has not heaped the rocks of the mountain only for the quarry, nor clothed the grass of the field only for the oven.

§ 8. Division of the pursuits of men into subservient and objective.

All science and all art may be divided into that which is subservient to life, and which is the object of it. As subservient to life, or practical, their results are, in the common sense of the word, useful. As the object of life or theoretic, they are, in the common sense, useless; and yet the step between practical and theoretic science is the step between the miner and the geologist, the apothecary and the chemist, and the step between practical and theoretic art is that between the bricklayer and the architect, between the plumber and the artist, and this is a step allowed on all hands to be from less to greater, so that the so-called useless part of each profession does by the authoritative and right instinct of mankind assume the superior and more noble place, even though books be sometimes written, and that by writers of no ordinary mind, which assume that a chemist is rewarded for the years of toil which have traced the greater part of the combinations of matter to their ultimate atoms, by discovering a cheap way of refining sugar, and date the eminence of the philosopher, whose

life has been spent in the investigation of the laws of light, from the time of his inventing an improvement in spectacles.

But the common consent of men proves and accepts the proposition, that whatever part of any pursuit ministers to the bodily comforts, and admits of material uses, is ignoble, and whatsoever part is addressed to the mind only, is noble; and that geology does better in re-clothing dry bones and revealing lost creations, than in tracing veins of lead and beds of iron; astronomy better in opening to us the houses of heaven, than in teaching navigation; botany better in displaying structure than in expressing juices; surgery better in investigating organization than in setting limbs; only it is ordained that, for our encouragement, every step we make in the more exalted range of science adds something also to its practical applicabilities; that all the great phenomena of nature, the knowledge of which is desired by the angels only, by us partly, as it reveals to farther vision the being and the glory of Him in whom they rejoice and we live, dispense, yet such kind influences and so much of material blessing as to be joyfully felt by all inferior creatures, and to be desired by them with such single desire as the imperfection of their nature may admit [1]; that the strong torrents which, in their own gladness fill the hills with hollow thunder and the vales with winding light, have yet their bounden charge of field to feed and barge to bear, that the fierce flames to which the Alp owes its upheaval and the volcano its terror, temper for us the metal vein and quickening spring, and that for our incitement, I say not our reward, for knowledge is its own reward, herbs have their healing, stones their preciousness, and stars their times.

§ 9. Their relative dignities.

It would appear, therefore, that those pursuits which are altogether theoretic, whose results are desirable or admirable in themselves and for their own sake, and in which no farther end to which their productions or discoveries are referred, can interrupt the contemplation of things as they are, by the endeavour to discover of what selfish uses they are capable (and of this order are painting and sculpture), ought to take rank above all pursuits which have any taint in them of subserviency to life,

[1] Hooker, Eccl. Pol. Book I. chap. ii. § 2.

in so far as all such tendency is the sign of less eternal and less holy function.[1] And such rank these two sublime arts would indeed assume in the minds of nations, and become objects of corresponding efforts, but for two fatal and wide-spread errors respecting the great faculties of mind concerned in them.

§ 10. How reversed through erring notions of the contemplative and imaginative faculties.

The first of these, or the theoretic faculty, is concerned with the moral perception and appreciation of ideas of beauty. And the error respecting it is the considering and calling it Aesthetic, degrading it to a mere operation of sense, or perhaps worse, of custom, so that the arts which appeal to it sink into a mere amusement, ministers to morbid sensibilities, ticklers and fanners of the soul's sleep.

The second great faculty is the imaginative, which the mind exercises in a certain mode of regarding or combining the ideas it has received from external nature, and the operations of which become in their turn objects of the theoretic faculty to other minds.

And the error respecting this faculty is, that its function is one of falsehood, that its operation is to exhibit things as they are *not*, and that in so doing it mends the works of God.

Now, as these are the two faculties to which I shall have occasion constantly to refer during that examination of the Ideas of Beauty and relation on which we are now entering, because it is only as received and treated by these, that those ideas become exalted and profitable, it becomes necessary for me, in the outset to explain their power and define their sphere, and to vindicate, in the system of our nature, their true place for the intellectual lens and moral retina by which and on which our informing thoughts are concentrated and represented.

§ 11. Object of the present section.

[1] I do not assert that the accidental utility of a theoretic pursuit, as of botany for instance, in any way degrades it, though it cannot be considered as elevating it. But essential utility, a purpose to which the pursuit is in some measure referred, as in architecture, invariably degrades, because then the theoretic part of the art is comparatively lost sight of; and thus architecture takes a level below that of sculpture or painting, even when the powers of mind developed in it are of the same high order.

When we pronounce the name of Giotto, our venerant thoughts are at Assisi and Padua, before they climb the Campanile of Santa Maria del Fiore. And he who would raise the ghost of Michael Angelo, must haunt the Sistine and St. Lorenzo, not St. Peter's.

CHAPTER II

OF THE THEORETIC FACULTY AS CONCERNED WITH PLEASURES OF SENSE

I PROCEED therefore first, to examine the nature of what I have called the Theoretic faculty, and to justify my substitution of the term "Theoretic" for aesthetic, which is the one commonly employed with reference to it.

§ 1. Explanation of the term "Theoretic."

Now the term "aesthesis" properly signifies mere sensual perception of the outward qualities and necessary effects of bodies, in which sense only, if we would arrive at any accurate conclusions on this difficult subject, it should always be used. But I wholly deny that the impressions of beauty are in any way sensual,—they are neither sensual nor intellectual, but moral, and for the faculty receiving them, whose difference from mere perception I shall immediately endeavour to explain, no term can be more accurate or convenient than that employed by the Greeks "Theoretic," which I pray permission, therefore, always to use, and to call the operation of the faculty itself, Theoria.

Let us begin at the lowest point, and observe, first, what differences of dignity may exist between different kinds of aesthetic or sensual pleasure, properly so called.

§ 2. Of the differences of rank in Pleasures of Sense.

Now it is evident that the being common to brutes, or peculiar to man, can alone be no rational test of inferiority, or dignity in pleasures. We must not assume that man is the nobler animal, and then deduce the nobleness of his delights; but we must prove the nobleness of the delights, and thence the nobleness of the animal. The dignity of affection is no way lessened because a large measure of it may be found in lower animals, neither is the vileness of gluttony and lust abated because they are common to men. It is clear, therefore, that there is a standard of dignity in the pleasures and passions themselves, by which we also class the creatures capable of, or suffering them.

The first great distinction, we observe, is that noted of Aristotle, that men are called temperate and intemperate with regard to some, and not so with respect to others, and that those, with respect to which they are so called, are, by common consent, held to be the vilest. But Aristotle, though exquisitely subtle in his notation of facts, does not frequently give us satisfactory account of, or reason for them. Content with stating the fact of these pleasures being held the lowest, he shows not why this estimation of them is just, and confuses the reader by observing casually respecting the higher pleasures, what is indeed true, but appears at first opposed to his own position, namely, that "men may be conceived, as also in these taking pleasure, either rightly, or more or less than is right."[1] Which being so, and evident capability of excess or defect existing in pleasures of this higher order, we ought to have been told how it happens that men are not called intemperate when they indulge in excess of this kind, and what is that difference in nature of the pleasure, which diminishes the criminality of its excess. This let us attempt to ascertain.

§ 3. Use of the terms "Temperate" and "Intemperate."

Men are held intemperate (ἀκόλαστοι), only when their desires overcome or prevent the action of their reason, and they are indeed intemperate in the exact degree in which such prevention or interference takes place, and so are actually ἀκόλαστοι, in many instances, and with respect to many resolves, which lower not the world's estimation of their temperance. For so long as it can be supposed that the reason has acted imperfectly owing to its own imperfection, or to the imperfection of the premises submitted to it, (as when men give an inordinate preference to their own pursuits, because they cannot, in the nature of things, have sufficiently experienced the goodness and benefit of others) and so long as it may be presumed that men have referred to reason in what they do, and have not suffered its orders to be disobeyed through mere impulse and desire, (though those orders may be full of error owing to the reason's own feebleness) so long men are not held intemperate. But when it is palpably evident that the reason cannot have erred, but that its voice has been deadened or disobeyed, and that the reasonable creature has

§ 4. Right use of the term "Intemperate."

[1] ὡς δεῖ, καὶ καθ' ὑπερβολὴν καὶ ἔλλειψιν.

been dragged dead round the walls of his own citadel by mere passion and impulse,—then, and then only, men are of all held intemperate. And this is evidently the case with respect to inordinate indulgence in pleasures of touch and taste, for these, being destructive in their continuance not only of all other pleasures, but of the very sensibilities by which they themselves are received, and as this penalty is actually known and experienced by those indulging in them, so that the reason cannot but pronounce right respecting their perilousness, there is no palliation of the wrong choice; and the man, as utterly incapable of Will[1], is called intemperate, or ἀκόλαστος.

It would be well if the reader would for himself follow out this subject, which it would be irrelevant here to pursue further, observing how a certain degree of intemperance is suspected and attributed to men with respect to higher impulses; as, for instance, in the case of anger, or any other passion criminally indulged, and yet is not so attributed as in the case of sensual pleasures, because in anger the reason is supposed not to have had time to operate, and to be itself affected by the presence of the passion, which seizes the man involuntarily and before he is aware; whereas, in the case of the sensual pleasures, the act is deliberate, and determined on beforehand, in direct defiance of reason. Nevertheless, if no precaution be taken against immoderate anger, and the passions gain upon the man, so as to be evidently wilful and unrestrained, and admitted contrary to all reason, we begin to look upon him as, in the real sense of the word, intemperate, or ἀκόλαστος, and assign to him, in consequence, his place among the beasts, as definitely as if he had yielded to the pleasurable temptations of touch or taste.

§ 5. Grounds of inferiority in the pleasures which are subjects of intemperance.

We see, then, that the primal ground of inferiority in these pleasures is that which *proves* their indulgence to be contrary to reason; namely, their destructiveness upon prolongation, and their incapability of coexisting continually with other delights or perfections of the system.

And this incapability of continuance directs us to the second cause of their inferiority; namely, that they are given to us as subservient to life, as

[1] Comp. Hooker, Eccl. Pol. Book 1. chap. viii.

instruments of our preservation—compelling us to seek the things necessary to our being, and that, therefore, when this their function is fully performed, they ought to have an end; and can be only artificially, and under high penalty prolonged. But the pleasures of sight and hearing are given as gifts. They answer not any purposes of mere existence, for the distinction of all that is useful or dangerous to us might be made, and often is made, by the eye, without its receiving the slightest pleasure of sight. We might have learned to distinguish fruits and grain from flowers, without having any superior pleasure in the aspect of the latter.

And the ear might have learned to distinguish the sounds that communicate ideas, or to recognise intimations of elemental danger without perceiving either music in the voice, or majesty in the thunder. And as these pleasures have no function to perform, so there is no limit to their continuance in the accomplishment of their end, for they are an end in themselves, and so may be perpetual with all of us—being in no way destructive, but rather increasing in exquisiteness by repetition.

Herein, then, we find very sufficient ground for the higher estimation of these delights, first, in their being eternal and inexhaustible, and secondly, in their being evidently no means or instrument of life, but an object of life. Now in whatever is an object of life, in whatever may be infinitely and for itself desired, we may be sure there is something of divine, for God will not make anything an object of life to his creatures which does not point to, or partake of, Himself. And so, though we were to regard the pleasures of sight merely as the highest of sensual pleasures, and though they were of rare occurrence, and, when occurring, isolated and imperfect, there would still be a supernatural character about them, owing to their permanence and self-sufficiency, where no other sensual pleasures are permanent or self-sufficient. But when, instead of being scattered, interrupted, or chance-distributed, they are gathered together, and so arranged to enhance each other as by chance they could not be, there is caused by them not only a feeling of strong affection towards the object in which they exist, but a perception of purpose and adaptation of it to our desires; a perception,

§ 6. Evidence of higher rank in pleasures of sight and hearing.

therefore, of the immediate operation of the Intelligence which so formed us, and so feeds us.

Out of which perception arise Joy, Admiration, and Gratitude.

Now the mere animal consciousness of the pleasantness I call Aesthesis; but the exulting, reverent, and grateful perception of it I call Theoria. For this, and this only, is the full comprehension and contemplation of the Beautiful as a gift of God, a gift not necessary to our being, but added to, and elevating it, and twofold, first of the desire, and secondly of the thing desired.

§ 7. How the lower pleasures may be elevated in rank.

And that this joyfulness and reverence are a necessary part of Theoretic pleasure is very evident when we consider that by the presence of these feelings even the lower and more sensual pleasures may be rendered Theoretic. Thus Aristotle has subtly noted that "we call not men intemperate so much with respect to the scents of roses or herb-perfumes as of ointments and of condiments," (though the reason that he gives for this be futile enough). For the fact is that of scents artificially prepared the extreme desire is intemperance, but of natural and God-given scents, which take their part in the harmony and pleasantness of creation, there can hardly be intemperance, not that there is any absolute difference between the two kinds, but that these are likely to be received with gratitude and joyfulness rather than those, so that we despise the seeking of essences and unguents, but not the sowing of violets along our garden banks. But all things may be elevated by affection, as the spikenard of Mary, and in the Song of Solomon, the myrrh upon the handles of the lock, and that of Isaac concerning his son. And the general law for all these pleasures is, that when sought in the abstract and ardently, they are foul things, but when received with thankfulness and with reference to God's glory, they become Theoretic, and so I can find something divine in the sweetness of wild fruits, as well as in the pleasantness of the pure air, and the tenderness of its natural perfumes that come and go as they list.

It will now be understood why I formerly said in the chapter respecting ideas of beauty, that those ideas were the subject of moral and not of intellectual, nor altogether of sensual perception; and why I spoke of the pleasures

connected with them as derived from "those material sources which are agreeable to our moral nature in its purity and perfection." For, as it is necessary to the existence of an idea of beauty, that the sensual pleasure which may be its basis, should be accompanied first with joy, then with love of the object, then with the perception of kindness in a superior intelligence, finally, with thankfulness and veneration towards that intelligence itself, and as no idea can be at all considered as in any way an idea of Beauty, until it be made up of these emotions, any more than we can be said to have an idea of a letter of which we perceive the perfume and the fair writing, without understanding the contents of it, nor intent of it; and as these emotions are in no way resultant from, nor obtainable by, any operation of the Intellect, it is evident that the sensation of beauty is not sensual on the one hand, nor is it intellectual on the other, but is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart, both for its truth and for its intensity, insomuch that even the right after action of the Intellect upon facts of beauty so apprehended, is dependent on the acuteness of the heart feeling about them, and thus the Apostolic words come true, in this minor respect as in all others, that men are alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, having the Understanding darkened because of the hardness of their hearts, and so being past feeling, give themselves up to lasciviousness; for we do indeed see constantly that men having naturally acute perceptions of the Beautiful, yet not receiving it with a pure heart, nor into their hearts at all, never comprehend it, nor receive good from it, but make it a mere minister to their desires, and accompaniment and seasoning of lower sensual pleasures, until all their emotions take the same earthly stamp, and the sense of beauty sinks into the servant of lust.

§ 8. Ideas of Beauty how essentially moral;

Nor is what the world commonly understands by the cultivation of taste, anything more or better than this, at least in times of corrupt and over-pampered civilization, when men build palaces and plant groves and gather luxuries, that they and their devices may hang in the corners of the world like fine-spun cobwebs, with greedy, puffed-up, spider-like lusts in the middle. And this, which in Christian times is

§ 9. How degraded by heartless reception.

the abuse and corruption of the sense of beauty, was in that Pagan life of which St. Paul speaks, little less than the essence of it, and the best they had, for I know not that of the expressions of affection towards external nature to be found among Heathen writers, there are any of which the balance and leading thought cleaves not towards the sensual parts of her. Her beneficence they sought, and her power they shunned, her teaching through both, they understood never. The pleasant influences of soft winds, and ringing streamlets, and shady coverts; of the violet couch, and plane tree shade,[1] they received, perhaps, in a more noble way than we, but they found not anything except fear, upon the bare mountain, or in the ghostly glen. The Hybla heather they loved more for its sweet hives than its purple hues. But the Christian Theoria seeks not, though it accepts, and touches with its own purity, what the Epicurean sought, but finds its food and the objects of its love everywhere, in what is harsh and fearful, as well as what is kind, nay, even in all that seems coarse and common place, seizing that which is good, and delighting more sometimes at finding its table spread in strange places, and in the presence of its enemies, and its honey coming out of the rock, than if all were harmonized into a less wondrous pleasure; hating only what is self-sighted and insolent of men's work, despising all that is not of God, unless reminding it of God, yet able to find evidence of him still, where all seems forgetful of him, and to turn that into a witness of his working which was meant to obscure it, and so with clear and unoffended sight beholding him for ever, according to the written promise,—Blessed are the Pure in heart, for they shall see God.

§ 10. How exalted by affection.

CHAPTER III

OF ACCURACY AND INACCURACY IN IMPRESSIONS OF SENSE

HITHERTO we have observed only the distinctions of dignity among pleasures of sense, considered merely as such,

[1] Plato, Phædrus, § 9.

and the way in which any of them may become theoretic in being received with right feeling.

§ 1. By what test is the health of the Perceptive faculty to be determined?

But as we go farther, and examine the distinctive nature of ideas of beauty, we shall, I believe, perceive something in them besides aesthetic pleasure, which attests a more important function belonging to them than attaches to other sensual ideas, and exhibits a more exalted character in the faculty by which they are received. And this was what I alluded to, when I said in the chapter already referred to (§ 1), that "we may indeed perceive, as far as we are acquainted with the nature of God, that we have been so constructed as in a healthy state of mind to derive pleasure from whatever things are illustrative of that nature."

This point it is necessary now farther to develope.

Our first inquiry must evidently be, how we are authorized to affirm of any man's mind, respecting impressions of sight, that it is in a healthy state or otherwise. What canon or test there is by which we may determine of these impressions that they are or are not *rightly* esteemed beautiful. To what authority, when men are at variance with each other on this subject, shall it be deputed to judge which is right? or is there any such authority or canon at all?

For it does not at first appear easy to prove that men ought to like one thing rather than another, and although this is granted generally by men's speaking of bad or good taste, it is frequently denied when we pass to particulars, by the assertion of each individual that he has a right to his opinion—a right which is sometimes claimed even in moral matters, though then palpably without foundation, but does not appear altogether irrational in matters aesthetic, wherein little operation of voluntary choice is supposed possible. It would appear strange, for instance, to assert, respecting a particular person who preferred the scent of violets to roses, that he had no right to do so. And yet, while I have said that the sensation of beauty is intuitive and necessary, as men derive pleasure from the scent of a rose, I have assumed that there are some sources from which it is rightly derived, and others from which it is wrongly derived, in other words that men have no right to think some things beautiful, and no right to remain apathetic with regard to others.

Hence then arise two questions, according to the sense in which the word right is taken; the first, in what way an impression of sense may be deceptive, and therefore a conclusion respecting it untrue; and the second, in what way an impression of sense, or the preference of one, may be a subject of will, and therefore of moral duty or delinquency.

§ 2. And in what sense may the terms Right and Wrong be attached to its conclusions?

To the first of these questions, I answer that we cannot speak of the immediate impression of sense as false, nor of its preference to others as mistaken, for no one can be deceived respecting the actual sensation he perceives or prefers. But falsity may attach to his assertion or supposition, that what he himself perceives is from the same object perceived by others, or is always to be by himself perceived, or is always to be by himself preferred, and when we speak of a man as wrong in his impressions of sense, we either mean that he feels differently from all, or a majority, respecting a certain object, or that he prefers at present those of his impressions, which ultimately he will not prefer.

To the second I answer, that over immediate impressions and immediate preferences we have no power, but over ultimate impressions, and especially ultimate preferences we have, and that, though we can neither at once choose whether we shall see an object red, green, or blue, nor determine to like the red better than the blue, or the blue better than the red, yet we can, if we choose, make ourselves ultimately susceptible of such impressions in other degrees, and capable of pleasure in them in different measure; and because, wherever power of any kind is given, there is responsibility attached, it is the duty of men to prefer certain impressions of sense to others, because they have the power of doing so, this being precisely analogous to the law of the moral world, whereby men are supposed not only capable of governing their likes and dislikes, but the whole culpability or propriety of actions is dependent upon this capability, so that men are guilty or otherwise, not for what they do, but for what they desire, the command being not, thou shalt obey, but thou shalt love, the Lord thy God, which, if men were not capable of governing and directing their affections, would be the command of an impossibility.

I assert, therefore, that even with respect to impressions of sense, we have a power of preference, and a corresponding duty, and I shall show first the nature of the power, and afterwards the nature of the duty.

§ 3. What power we have over impressions of sense.

Let us take an instance from one of the lowest of the senses, and observe the kind of power we have over the impressions of lingual taste. On the first offering of two different things to the palate, it is not in our power to prevent or command the instinctive preference. One will be unavoidably and helplessly preferred to the other. But if the same two things be submitted to judgment frequently and attentively, it will be often found that their relations change. The palate, which at first perceived only the coarse and violent qualities of either, will, as it becomes more experienced, acquire greater subtlety and delicacy of discrimination, perceiving in both agreeable or disagreeable qualities at first unnoticed, which on continued experience will probably become more influential than the first impressions, and whatever this final verdict may be, it is felt by the person who gives it, and received by others as a more correct one than the first.

So, then, the power we have over the preference of impressions of taste is not actual nor immediate, but only a power of testing and comparing them frequently and carefully, until that which is the more permanent, the more consistently agreeable, be determined. But when the instrument of taste is thus in some degree perfected and rendered subtle, by its being practised upon a single object, its conclusions will be more rapid with respect to others, and it will be able to distinguish more quickly in other things, and even to prefer at once, those qualities which are calculated finally to give it most pleasure, though more capable with respect to those on which it is more frequently exercised; whence people are called judges with respect to this or that particular object of Taste.

§ 4. Depends on acuteness of attention.

Now that verdicts of this kind are received as authoritative by others, proves another and more important fact, namely, that not only changes of opinion take place in consequence of experience, but that those changes are from variation of opinion to unity of opinion, and that whatever may be the differences

§ 5. Ultimate conclusions universal.

of estimate among unpractised or uncultivated tastes, there will be unity of taste among the experienced. And that therefore the operation of repeated trial and experience is to arrive at principles of preference in some sort common to all, and which are a part of our nature.

I have selected the sense of taste for an instance, because it is the least favourable to the position I hold, since there is more latitude allowed, and more actual variety of verdict in the case of this sense than of any other; and yet, however susceptible of variety even the ultimate approximations of its preferences may be, the authority of judges is distinctly allowed, and we hear every day the admission, by those of unpractised palate, that they are, or may be wrong in their opinions respecting the real pleasurableness of things either to themselves, or to others.

The sense, however, in which they thus use the word "wrong" is merely that of falseness or inaccuracy in conclusion, not of moral delinquency. But there is, as I have stated, a duty, more or less imperative, attached to every power we possess, and therefore to this power over the lower senses as well as to all others.

§ 6. What duty is attached to this power over impressions of sense.

And this duty is evidently to bring every sense into that state of cultivation in which it shall both form the truest conclusions respecting all that is submitted to it, and procure us the greatest amount of pleasure consistent with its due relation to other senses and functions. Which three constituents of perfection in sense, true judgment, maximum sensibility, and right relation to others, are invariably coexistent and involved one by the other, for the true judgment is the result of the high sensibility, and the high sensibility of the right relation. Thus, for instance, with respect to pleasures of taste, it is our duty not to devote such inordinate attention to the discrimination of them as must be inconsistent with our pursuit, and destructive of our capacity, of higher and preferable pleasures, but to cultivate the sense of them in that way which is consistent with all other good, by temperance, namely, and by such attention as the mind at certain resting moments may fitly pay even to so ignoble a source of pleasure as this, by which discipline we shall bring the faculty of taste itself to its real maximum of sensibility; for it may not be doubted

but that health, hunger, and such general refinement of bodily habits as shall make the body a perfect and fine instrument in all respects, are better promoters of actual sensual enjoyment of taste, than the sickened, sluggish, hard-stimulated fastidiousness of Epicurism.

So also it will certainly be found with all the senses, that they individually receive the greatest and purest pleasure when they are in right condition and degree of subordination to all the rest, and that by the over cultivation of any one (for morbid sources of pleasure and correspondent temptations to irrational indulgence, confessedly are attached to all) we shall add more to their power as instruments of punishment than of pleasure.

§ 7. How rewarded.

We see then, in this example of the lowest sense, that the power we have over sensations and preferences depends mainly on the exercise of attention through certain prolonged periods, and that by this exercise, we arrive at ultimate, constant, and common sources of agreeableness, casting off those which are external, accidental, and individual.

That then which is required in order to the attainment of accurate conclusions respecting the Essence of the beautiful, is nothing more than earnest, loving, and unselfish attention to our impressions of it, by which those which are shallow, false, or peculiar to times and temperaments, may be distinguished from those that are eternal. And this dwelling upon, and fond contemplation of them (the Anschauung of the Germans), is perhaps as much as was meant by the Greek Theoria, and it is indeed a very noble exercise of the souls of men, and one by which they are peculiarly distinguished from the anima of lower creatures, which cannot, I think, be proved to have any capacity of contemplation at all, but only a restless vividness of perception and conception, the "fancy" of Hooker (Eccl. Pol. Book i. Chap. vi. 2.) And yet this dwelling upon them comes not up to that which I wish to express by the word Theoria, unless it be accompanied by full perception of their being a gift from and manifestation of God, and by all those other nobler emotions before described, since not until so felt is their essential nature comprehended.

§ 8. Especially with respect to ideas of Beauty.

But two very important points are to be observed respecting the direction and discipline of the attention in the early stages of judgment. The first, that, for beneficent purposes, the nature of man has been made reconcileable by custom to many things naturally painful to it, and even improper for it, and that therefore, though by continued experience, united with thought, we may discover that which is best of several, yet if we submit ourselves to authority or fashion, and close our eyes, we may be by custom made to tolerate, and even to love and long for, that which is naturally painful and pernicious to us, whence arise incalculable embarrassments on the subject of art.

§ 9. Errors induced by the power of habit.

The second, that, in order to the discovery of that which is better of two things, it is necessary that both should be equally submitted to the attention, and therefore that we should have so much faith in authority as shall make us repeatedly observe and attend to that which is said to be right, even though at present we may not feel it so. And in the right mingling of this faith with the openness of heart, which proves all things, lies the great difficulty of the cultivation of the taste, as far as the spirit of the scholar is concerned, though, even when he has this spirit, he may be long retarded by having evil examples submitted to him by ignorant masters.

§ 10. The necessity of submission in early stages of judgment.

The temper, therefore, by which right taste is formed, is first, patient. It dwells upon what is submitted to it, it does not trample upon it lest it should be pearls, even though it look like husks, it is a good ground, soft, penetrable, retentive, it does not send up thorns of unkind thoughts, to choke the weak seed, it is hungry and thirsty too, and drinks all the dew that falls on it, it is an honest and good heart, that shows no too ready springing before the sun be up, but fails not afterwards; it is distrustful of itself, so as to be ready to believe and to try all things, and yet so trustful of itself, that it will neither quit what it has tried, nor take anything without trying. And that pleasure which it has in things that it finds true and good, is so great that it cannot possibly be led aside by any tricks of fashion, nor diseases of vanity, it cannot be cramped in its conclusions by partialities and hypocrisies, its visions and its delights are too penetrating, too living, for any white-washed

object or shallow fountain long to endure or supply. It clasps all that it loves so hard, that it crushes it if it be hollow.

§ 11. The large scope of matured judgment.

Now, the conclusions of this disposition are sure to be eventually right, more and more right according to the general maturity of all the powers, but it is sure to come right at last, because its operation is in analogy to, and in harmony with, the whole spirit of the Christian moral system, and that which it will ultimately love and rest in, are great sources of happiness common to all the human race, and based on the relations they hold to their Creator.

These common and general sources of pleasure are, I believe, in a certain seal, or impress of divine work and character, upon whatever God has wrought in all the world; only, it being necessary for the perception of them, that their contraries should also be set before us, these divine qualities, though inseparable from all divine works, are yet suffered to exist in such varieties of degree, that their most limited manifestation shall, in opposition to their most abundant, act as a foil or contrary, just as we conceive of cold as contrary to heat, though the most extreme cold we can produce or conceive is not inconsistent with an unknown amount of heat in the body.

§ 12. How distinguishable from false taste.

Our purity of taste, therefore, is best tested by its universality, for if we can only admire this thing or that, we may be sure that our cause for liking is of a finite and false nature. But if we can perceive beauty in everything of God's doing, we may argue that we have reached the true preception of its universal laws. Hence, false taste may be known by its fastidiousness, by its demands of pomp, splendour, and unusual combination, by its enjoyment only of particular styles and modes of things, and by its pride also, for it is for ever meddling, mending, accumulating, and self-exulting, its eye is always upon itself, and it tests all things round it by the way they fit it. But true taste is for ever growing, learning, reading, worshipping, laying its hand upon its mouth because it is astonished, casting its shoes from off its feet because it finds all ground holy, lamenting over itself and testing itself by the way that it fits things. And it finds whereof to feed, and whereby to grow, in all things, and therefore the complaint so often made by young artists, that they have

not within their reach materials or subjects enough for their fancy, is utterly groundless, and the sign only of their own blindness and inefficiency, for there is that to be seen in every street and lane of every city, that to be felt and found in every human heart and countenance, that to be loved in every roadside weed and moss grown wall, which, in the hands of faithful men, may convey emotions of glory and sublimity continual and exalted.

§ 13. The danger of a spirit of choice.

Let therefore the young artist beware of the spirit of Choice,[1] it is an insolent spirit at the best and commonly a base and blind one too, checking all progress and blasting all power, encouraging weaknesses, pampering partialities, and teaching us to look to accidents of nature for the help and the joy which should come from our own hearts. He draws nothing well who thirsts not to draw *every*thing; when a good painter shrinks, it is because he is humbled, not fastidious, when he stops, it is because he is surfeited, and not because he thinks Nature has given him unkindly food, or that he fears famine.[2] I have seen a man of true taste pause for a quarter of an hour to look at the channellings that recent rain had traced in a heap of cinders.

§ 14. And criminality.

And here is evident another reason of that duty which we owe respecting impressions of sight, namely, to discipline ourselves to the enjoyment of those which are eternal in their nature, not only because these are the most acute, but because they are the most easily, constantly, and unselfishly attainable. For had it been ordained by the Almighty that the highest pleasures of sight should be those of most difficult attainment, and that to arrive at them it should be necessary to accumulate gilded palaces, tower over tower, and pile artificial mountains around insinuated lakes, there would have been a direct contradiction between the unselfish duties and inherent desires of every individual. But no such contradiction exists in the system of divine Providence, which, leaving it open to us, if we will, as Creatures in probation,

[1] "Nothing comes amiss,—
A good digestion turneth all to health."—
G. HERBERT.

[2] Yet note the difference between the choice that comes of Pride, and the choice that comes of Love, and compare Chap. XV. § 6.

to abuse this sense like every other, and pamper it with selfish and thoughtless vanities as we pamper the palate with deadly meats, until the appetite of tasteful cruelty is lost in its sickened satiety, incapable of pleasure, unless, Caligula like, it concentrate the labour of a million of lives into the sensation of an hour, leaves it also open to us, by humble and loving ways, to make ourselves susceptible of deep delight from the meanest objects of creation, and of a delight which shall not separate us from our fellows, nor require the sacrifice of any duty or occupation, but which shall bind us closer to men and to God, and be with us always, harmonized with every action, consistent with every claim, unchanging and eternal.

§15. How certain conclusions respecting beauty are by reason demonstrable.

Seeing then that these qualities of material objects which are calculated to give us this universal pleasure, are demonstrably constant in their address to human nature, they must belong in some measure to whatever has been esteemed beautiful throughout successive ages of the world (and they are also by their definition common to all the works of God). Therefore it is evident that it must be possible to reason them out, as well as to feel them out, possible to divest every object of that which makes it accidentally or temporarily pleasant, and to strip it bare of distinctive qualities, until we arrive at those which it has in common with all other beautiful things, which we may then safely affirm to be the cause of its ultimate and true delightfulness.

§ 16. With what liabilities to error.

Now this process of reasoning will be that which I shall endeavour to employ in the succeeding investigations, a process perfectly safe, so long as we are quite sure that we are reasoning concerning objects which produce in us one and the same sensation, but not safe if the sensation produced be of a different nature, though it may be equally agreeable; for what produces a different sensation must be a different cause. And the difficulty of reasoning respecting Beauty arises chiefly from the ambiguity of the word, which stands in different people's minds for totally different sensations, for which there can be no common cause.

When, for instance, Mr. Alison endeavours to support his position that "no man is sensible to beauty in those objects with regard to which he has not previous ideas," by the

remark that "the beauty of a theory, or of a relic of antiquity, is unintelligible to a peasant" we see at once that it is hopeless to argue with a man who, under his general term beauty, may, for anything we know, be sometimes speaking of mathematical demonstrability and sometimes of historical interest; while even if we could succeed in limiting the term to the sense of external attractiveness, there would be still room for many phases of error, for though the beauty of a snowy mountain and of a human cheek or forehead, so far as both are considered as mere matter, is the same, and traceable to certain qualities of colour and line, common to both, and by reason extricable, yet the flush of the cheek and moulding of the brow, as they express modesty, affection, or intellect, possess sources of agreeableness which are not common to the snowy mountain, and the interference of whose influence we must be cautious to prevent in our examination of those which are material or universal.[1]

§ 17. The term "Beauty" how limitable in the outset. Divided into Typical and Vital.

The first thing, then, that we have to do, is accurately to discriminate and define those appearances from which we are about to reason as belonging to beauty, properly so called, and to clear the ground of all the confused ideas and erroneous theories with which the misapprehension or metaphorical use of the term has encumbered it.

By the term Beauty, then, properly are signified two things. First, that external quality of bodies already so often spoken of, and which, whether it occur in a stone, flower, beast, or in man, is absolutely identical, which, as I have already asserted, may be shown to be in some sort typical of the Divine attributes, and which, therefore, I shall, for distinction's sake, call Typical Beauty; and, secondarily, the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things, more especially of the joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man. And this kind of beauty I shall call Vital Beauty.

Any application of the word beautiful to other appearances or qualities than these, is either false or metaphorical, as, for instance, to the splendour of a discovery, the fitness

[1] Compare Spenser. (Hymn to Beauty.)

> But ah, believe me, there is more than so,
> That works such wonders in the minds of men.

of a proportion, the coherence of a chain of reasoning, or the power of bestowing pleasure which objects receive from association, a power confessedly great, and interfering, as we shall presently find, in a most embarrassing way with the attractiveness of inherent beauty.

But in order that the mind of the reader may not be biassed at the outset by that which he may happen to have received of current theories respecting beauty, founded on the above metaphorical uses of the word (theories which are less to be reprobated as accounting falsely for the sensations of which they treat, than as confusing two or more pleasurable sensations together), I shall briefly glance at the four erroneous positions most frequently held upon this subject, before proceeding to examine those typical and vital properties of things, to which I conceive that all our original conceptions of beauty may be traced.

CHAPTER IV

OF FALSE OPINIONS HELD CONCERNING BEAUTY

I PURPOSE at present to speak only of four of the more current opinions respecting beauty, for of the errors connected with the pleasurableness of proportion, and of the expression of right feelings in the countenance, I shall have opportunity to treat in the succeeding chapters; (compare Ch. VI. Ch. XIV.)

§ 1. Of the false opinion that Truth is beauty, and vice versa.

Those erring or inconsistent positions which I would at once dismiss are, the First, that the Beautiful is the True, the Second, that the Beautiful is the Useful, the Third, that it is dependent on Custom, and the Fourth, that it is dependent on the association of ideas.

To assert that the beautiful is the true, appears, at first, like asserting that propositions are matter, and matter propositions. But giving the best and most rational interpretation we can, and supposing the holders of this strange position to mean only that things are beautiful which appear what they indeed are, and ugly which appear what they

are not, we find them instantly contradicted by each and every conclusion of experience. A stone looks as truly a stone as a rose looks a rose, and yet is not so beautiful; a cloud may look more like a castle than a cloud, and be the more beautiful on that account. The mirage of the desert is fairer than its sands; the false image of the under heaven fairer than the sea. I am at a loss to know how any so untenable a position could ever have been advanced; but it may, perhaps, have arisen from some confusion of the beauty of art with the beauty of nature, and from an illogical expansion of the very certain truth, that nothing is beautiful in art, which, professing to be an imitation, or a statement, is not as such in some sort true.

§ 2. Of the false opinion that beauty is usefulness. Compare Chap. xii. § 5.

That the beautiful is the useful, is an assertion evidently based on that limited and false sense of the latter term which I have already deprecated. As it is the most degrading and dangerous supposition which can be advanced on the subject, so, fortunately, it is the most palpably absurd. It is to confound admiration with hunger, love with lust, and life with sensation; it is to assert that the human creature has no ideas and no feelings, except those ultimately referable to its brutal appetites. It has not a single fact nor appearance of fact to support it, and needs no combating, at least until its advocates have obtained the consent of the majority of mankind, that the most beautiful productions of nature are seeds and roots; and of art, spades and millstones.

§ 3. Of the false opinion that beauty results from custom. Compare Chap. vi. §1.

Somewhat more rational grounds appear for the assertion that the sense of the beautiful arises from familiarity with the object, though even this could not long be maintained by a thinking person. For all that can be alleged in defence of such a supposition is, that familiarity deprives some objects which at first appeared ugly, of much of their repulsiveness, whence it is as rational to conclude that familiarity is the cause of beauty, as it would be to argue that because it is possible to acquire a taste for olives, therefore custom is the cause of lusciousness in grapes. Nevertheless, there are some phenomena resulting from the tendency of our nature to be influenced by habit of which it may be well to observe the limits.

Custom has a two-fold operation: the one to deaden the frequency and force of repeated impressions, the other to endear the familiar object to the affections. Commonly, where the mind is vigorous, and the power of sensation very perfect, it has rather the last operation than the first; with meaner minds, the first takes place in the higher degree, so that they are commonly characterized by a desire of excitement, and the want of the loving, fixed, theoretic power. But both take place in some degree with all men, so that as life advances, impressions of all kinds become less rapturous owing to their repetition. It is however beneficently ordained that repulsiveness shall be diminished by custom in a far greater degree than the sensation of beauty, so that the anatomist in a little time loses all sense of horror in the torn flesh, and carous bone, while the sculptor ceases not to feel to the close of his life, the deliciousness of every line of the outward frame. So then as in that with which we are made familiar, the repulsiveness is constantly diminishing, and such claims as it may be able to put forth on the affections are daily becoming stronger, while, in what is submitted to us of new or strange, that which may be repulsive is felt in its full force, while no hold is as yet laid on the affections, there is a very strong preference induced in most minds for that to which they are accustomed over that they know not, and this is strongest in those which are least open to sensations of positive beauty.

§ 4. The two-fold operation of custom. It deadens Sensation, but confirms Affection.

But however far this operation may be carried, its utmost effect is but the deadening and approximating the sensations of beauty and ugliness. It never mixes nor crosses, nor in any way alters them; it has not the slightest connection with nor power over their nature. By tasting two wines alternately, we may deaden our perception of their flavour; nay, we may even do more than can ever be done in the case of sight, we may confound the two flavours together. But it will hardly be argued therefore that custom is the cause of either flavour. And so, though by habit we may deaden the effect of ugliness or beauty, it is not for that reason to be affirmed that habit is the cause of either sensation. We may keep a skull beside us as long as we please, we may overcome its repulsiveness,

§ 5. But never either creates or destroys the essence of Beauty.

we may render ourselves capable of perceiving many qualities of beauty about its lines, we may contemplate it for years together if we will, it and nothing else, but we shall not get ourselves to think as well of it as of a child's fair face.

It would be easy to pursue the subject farther, but I believe that every thoughtful reader will be perfectly well able to supply farther illustrations, and sweep away the sandy foundations of the opposite theory, unassisted. Let it, however, be observed, that in spite of all custom, an Englishman instantly acknowledges, and at first sight, the superiority of the turban to the hat, or of the plaid to the coat, that whatever the dictates of immediate fashion may compel, the superior gracefulness of the Greek or middle-age costumes is invariably felt, and that, respecting what has been asserted of negro nations looking with disgust on the white face, no importance whatever is to be attached to the opinions of races who have never received any ideas of beauty whatsoever (these ideas being only received by minds under some certain degree of cultivation), and whose disgust arises naturally from what they may suppose to be a sign of weakness or ill health. It would be futile to proceed into farther detail. I pass to the last and most weighty theory, that the agreeableness in objects which we call beauty is the result of the association with them of agreeable or interesting ideas.

§ 6. Instances.

Frequent has been the support and wide the acceptance of this supposition, and yet I suppose that no two consecutive sentences were ever written in defence of it, without involving either a contradiction or a confusion of terms. Thus Alison, "There are scenes undoubtedly more beautiful than Runnymede, yet to those who recollect the great event that passed there, there is no scene perhaps which so strongly seizes on the imagination." Where we are wonder-struck at the audacious obtuseness which would prove the power of imagination by its overcoming that very other power (of inherent beauty) whose existence the arguer denies. For the only logical conclusion which can possibly be drawn from the above sentence is, that imagination is *not* the source of beauty, for although no scene seizes so

§ 7. Of the false opinion that Beauty depends on the association of ideas.

strongly on the imagination, yet there are scenes "more beautiful than Runnymede." And though instances of self-contradiction as laconic and complete as this are to be found in few writers except Alison, yet if the arguments on the subject be fairly sifted from the mass of confused language with which they are always encumbered and placed in logical form, they will be found invariably to involve one of these two syllogisms, either, Association gives pleasure, and Beauty gives pleasure, therefore Association is beauty. Or, the power of Association is stronger than the power of beauty, therefore the power of Association *is* the power of beauty.

§ 8. Association. Is, 1st, Rational. It is of no efficiency as a cause of Beauty.

Nevertheless it is necessary for us to observe the real value and authority of association in the moral system, and how ideas of actual beauty may be affected by it, otherwise we shall be liable to embarrassment throughout the whole of the succeeding argument.

Association is of two kinds. Rational and Accidental. By Rational Association I understand the interest which any object may bear historically as having been in some way connected with the affairs or affections of men; an interest shared in the minds of all who are aware of such connection: which to call beauty is mere and gross confusion of terms, it is no theory to be confuted, but a misuse of language to be set aside, a misuse involving the positions that in uninhabited countries, the vegetation has no grace, the rock no dignity, the cloud no colour, and that the snowy summits of the Alps receive no loveliness from the sunset light, because they have not been polluted by the wrath, ravage, and misery of men.

§ 9. Association Accidental. The extent of its influence.

By Accidental Association, I understand the accidental connection of ideas and memories with material things, owing to which those material things are regarded as agreeable or otherwise, according to the nature of the feelings or recollections they summon; the association being commonly involuntary and oftentimes so vague as that no distinct image is suggested by the object, but we feel a painfulness in it or pleasure from it, without knowing wherefore. Of this operation of the mind (which is that of which I spoke as causing inextricable embarrassments on the

subject of beauty) the experience is constant, so that its more energetic manifestations require no illustration. But I do not think that the minor degrees and shades of this great influence have been sufficiently appreciated. Not only all vivid emotions and all circumstances of exciting interest leave their light and shadow on the senseless things and instruments among which or through whose agency they have been felt or learned, but I believe that the eye cannot rest on a material form, in a moment of depression or exultation, without communicating to that form a spirit and a life, a life which will make it afterwards in some degree loved or feared, a charm or a painfulness for which we shall be unable to account even to ourselves, which will not indeed be perceptible, except by its delicate influence on our judgment in cases of complicated beauty. Let the eye but rest on a rough piece of branch of curious form during a conversation with a friend, rest, however, unconsciously, and though the conversation be forgotten, though every circumstance connected with it be as utterly lost to the memory as though it had not been, yet the eye will, through the whole life after, take a certain pleasure in such boughs which it had not before, a pleasure so slight, a trace of feeling so delicate as to leave us utterly unconscious of its peculiar power; but undestroyable by any reasoning, a part, thenceforward, of our constitution, destroyable only by the same arbitrary process of association by which it was created. Reason has no effect upon it whatsoever. And there is probably no one opinion which is formed by any of us, in matters of taste, which is not in some degree influenced by unconscious association of this kind. In many who have no definite rules of judgment, preference is decided by little else, and thus, unfortunately, its operations are mistaken for, or rather substituted for, those of inherent beauty, and its real position and value in the moral system is in a great measure overlooked.

§ 10. The Dignity of its function.

For I believe that mere pleasure and pain have less associative power than duty performed or omitted, and that the great use of the associative faculty is not to add beauty to material things, but to add force to the Conscience. But for this external and all-powerful witness, the voice of the inward guide might be lost in each particular instance, almost as soon as

disobeyed, the echo of it in after time, whereby, though perhaps feeble as warning, it becomes powerful as punishment, might be silenced, and the strength of the protection pass away in the lightness of the lash. Therefore it has received the power of enlisting external and unmeaning things in its aid, and transmitting to all that is indifferent its own authority to reprove or reward, so that, as we travel the way of life, we have the choice, according to our working, of turning all the voices of nature into one song of rejoicing, and all her lifeless creatures into a glad company, whereof the meanest shall be beautiful in our eyes, by its kind message, or of withering and quenching her sympathy into a fearful, withdrawn silence of condemnation, or into a crying out of her stones, and a shaking of her dust against us. Nor is it any marvel that the theoretic faculty should be overpowered by this momentous operation, and the indifferent appeals and inherent glories of external things in the end overlooked, when the perfection of God's works is felt only as the sweetness of his promises, and their admirableness only as the threatenings of his power.

§ 11. How it is connected with impressions of beauty.

But it is evident that the full exercise of this noble function of the Associative faculty is inconsistent with absolute and incontrovertible conclusions on subjects of theoretic preference. For it is quite impossible for any individual to distinguish in himself the unconscious underworking of indefinite association, peculiar to him individually, from those great laws of choice under which he is comprehended with all his race. And it is well for us that it is so, the harmony of God's good work is not in us interrupted by this mingling of universal and peculiar principles; for by these such difference is secured in the feelings as shall make fellowship itself more delightful, by its inter-communicate character, and such variety of feeling also in each of us separately as shall make us capable of enjoying scenes of different kinds and orders, instead of morbidly seeking for some perfect epitome of the Beautiful in one; and also that deadening by custom of theoretic impressions to which I have above alluded, is counter-balanced by the pleasantness of acquired association; and the loss of the intense feeling of the youth, which "had no need of a remoter charm, by

thought supplied, or any interest unborrowed from the eye" is replaced by the gladness of conscience, and the vigour of the reflecting and imaginative faculties, as they take their wide and aged grasp of the great relations between the Earth and its dead People.

§ 12. And what caution it renders necessary in the examination of them.

In proportion therefore to the value, constancy, and efficiency of this influence, we must be modest and cautious in the pronouncing of positive opinions on the subject of beauty. For every one of us has peculiar sources of enjoyment necessarily opened to him in certain scenes and things, sources which are sealed to others, and we must be wary on the one hand of confounding these in ourselves with ultimate conclusions of taste, and so forcing them upon all as authoritative, and on the other of supposing that the enjoyments of others which we cannot share are shallow or unwarrantable, because incommunicable. I fear, for instance, that in the former portion of this work I may have attributed too much community and authority to certain affections of my own for scenery inducing emotions of wild, impetuous, and enthusiastic characters, and too little to those which I perceive in others for things peaceful, humble, meditative, and solemn. So also between youth and age there will be found differences of seeking, which are not wrong, nor of false choice in either, but of different temperament, the youth sympathising more with the gladness, fulness, and magnificence of things, and the grey hairs with their completion, sufficiency, and repose. And so, neither condemning the delights of others, nor altogether distrustful of our own, we must advance, as we live on, from what is brilliant to what is pure, and from what is promised to what is fulfilled, and from what is our strength to what is our crown, only observing in all things how that which is indeed wrong, and to be cut up from the root, is dislike, and not affection. For by the very nature of these Beautiful qualities, which I have defined to be the signature of God upon his works, it is evident that in whatever we altogether dislike, we see not all; that the keenness of our vision is to be tested by the expansiveness of our love, and that as far as the influence of association has voice in the question, though it is indeed possible that the inevitable painfulness of an object, for which we can render no

sufficient reason, may be owing to its recalling of a sorrow, it is more probably dependent on its accusation of a crime.

CHAPTER V

OF TYPICAL BEAUTY
IST, OF INFINITY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE INCOMPREHENSIBILITY

§ 1. Impossibility of adequately treating the subject.

THE subject being now in some measure cleared of embarrassment, let us briefly distinguish those qualities or types on whose combination is dependent the power of mere material loveliness. I pretend neither to enumerate nor perceive them all, for it may be generally observed that whatever good there may be, desirable by man, more especially good belonging to his moral nature, there will be a corresponding agreeableness in whatever external object reminds him of such good, whether it remind him by arbitrary association, or by typical resemblance, and that the infinite ways, whether by reason or experience discoverable by which matter in some sort may remind us of moral perfections, are hardly within any reasonable limits to be explained, if even by any single mind they might all be traced. Yet certain palpable and powerful modes there are, by observing which, we may come at such general conclusions on the subject as may be practically useful, and more than these I shall not attempt to obtain.

2. With what simplicity of feeling to be approached.

And first, I would ask of the reader to enter upon the subject with me, as far as may be, as a little child, ridding himself of all conventional and authoritative thoughts, and especially of such associations as arise from his respect for Pagan art, or which are in any way traceable to classical readings. I recollect that Mr. Alison traces his first perceptions of beauty in external nature to this most corrupt source, thus betraying so total and singular a want of natural sensibility as may well excuse the deficiencies of his following arguments. For there was never yet the child of

any promise (so far as the theoretic faculties are concerned) but awaked to the sense of beauty with the first gleam of reason; and I suppose there are few, among those who love Nature otherwise than by profession and at second-hand, who look not back to their youngest and least-learned days as those of the most intense, superstitious, insatiable, and beatific perception of her splendours. And the bitter decline of this glorious feeling, though many note it not, partly owing to the cares and weight of manhood, which leave them not the time nor the liberty to look for their lost treasure, and partly to the human and divine affections which are appointed to take its place, yet has formed the subject, not indeed of lamentation, but of holy thankfulness for the witness it bears to the immortal origin and end of our nature, to one whose authority is almost without appeal in all questions relating to the influence of external things upon the pure human soul.

> Heaven lies about us in our infancy,—
> Shades of the prison-house begin to close
> Upon the growing boy.
> But he beholds the light, and whence it flow
> He sees it in his joy.
> The youth, who daily farther from the east
> Must travel, still is nature's priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended.
> At length the Man perceives it die away
> And fade into the light of common day.

And if it were possible for us to recollect all the unaccountable and happy instincts of the careless time, and to reason upon them with the maturer judgment, we might arrive at more rapid and right results than either the philosophy or the sophisticated practice of art have yet attained. But we lose the perceptions before we are capable of methodizing or comparing them.

§ 3. The Child instinct respecting space

One, however, of these child instincts, I believe that few forget, the emotion namely, caused by all open ground, or lines of any spacious kind against the sky, behind which there might be conceived the Sea. It is an emotion more pure than that caused by the Sea itself, for I recollect distinctly running down behind the banks of a high beach to get

their land line cutting against the sky, and receiving a more strange delight from this than from the sight of the Ocean: I am not sure that this feeling is common to all children (or would be common, if they were all in circumstances admitting it), but I have ascertained it to be frequent among those who possess the most vivid sensibilities for Nature; and I am certain that the modification of it, which belongs to our after years, is common to all, the love, namely, of a light distance appearing over a comparatively dark horizon. This I have tested too frequently to be mistaken by offering to indifferent spectators forms of equal abstract beauty in half tint, relieved, the one against dark sky, the other against a bright distance. The preference is invariably given to the latter, and it is very certain that this preference arises not from any supposition of there being greater truth in this than the other, for the same preference is unhesitatingly accorded to the same effect in Nature herself. Whatever beauty there may result from effects of light on foreground objects, from the dew of the grass, the flash of the cascade, the glitter of the birch trunk, or the fair daylight hues of darker things (and joyfulness there is in all of them,) there is yet a light which the eye invariably seeks with a deeper feeling of the beautiful, the light of the declining or breaking day, and the flakes of scarlet cloud burning like watch fires in the green sky of the horizon; a deeper feeling, I say, not perhaps more acute, but having more of spiritual hope and longing, less of animal and present life, more manifest, invariably, in those of more serious and determined mind (I use the word serious, not as being opposed to cheerful, but to trivial and volatile), but, I think, marked and unfailing even in those of the least thoughtful dispositions. I am willing to let it rest on the determination of every reader, whether the pleasure which he has received from these effects of calm and luminous distance be not the most singular and memorable of which he has been conscious, whether all that is dazzling in colour, perfect in form, gladdening in expression, be not of evanescent and shallow appealing, when compared with the still small voice of the level twilight behind purple hills, or the scarlet arch of dawn over the dark troublous-edged sea.

§ 4. Continued in after life.

Let us try to discover that which effects of this kind possess or suggest, peculiar to themselves, and which other effects of light and colour possess not. There *must* be something in them of a peculiar character, and that, whatever it be, must be one of the primal and most earnest motives of beauty to human sensation.

§ 5. Whereto this instinct is traceable.

Do they show finer characters of form than can be developed by the broader daylight? Not so; for their power is almost independent of the forms they assume or display; it matters little whether the bright clouds be simple or manifold, whether the mountain line be subdued or majestic, the fairer forms of earthly things are by them subdued and disguised, the round and muscular growth of the forest trunks is sunk into skeleton lines of quiet shade, the purple clefts of the hill side are labyrinthed in the darkness, the orbed spring and whirling wave of the torrent have given place to a white, ghastly, interrupted gleaming. Have they more perfection or fulness of colour? Not so; for their effect is oftentimes deeper when their hues are dim, than when they are blazoned with crimson and pale gold, and assuredly, in the blue of the rainy sky, in the many tints of morning flowers, in the sunlight on summer foliage and field, there are more sources of mere sensual colour-pleasure than in the single streak of wan and dying light. It is not then by nobler form, it is not by positiveness of hue, it is not by intensity of light (for the sun itself at noonday is effectless upon the feelings), that this strange distant space possesses its attractive power. But there is one thing that it has, or suggests, which no other object of sight suggests in equal degree and that is,—Infinity. It is of all visible things the least material, the least finite, the farthest withdrawn from the earth prison house, the most typical of the nature of God, the most suggestive of the glory of his dwelling-place. For the sky of night, though we may know it boundless, is dark, it is a studded vault, a roof that seems to shut us in and down, but the bright distance has no limit, we feel its infinity, as we rejoice in its purity of light.

Now not only is this expression of infinity in distance most precious wherever we find it, however solitary it may be, and however unassisted by other forms and kinds of beauty, but it is of that value that no such other forms will

altogether recompense us for its loss, and, much as I dread the enunciation of anything that may seem like a conventional rule, I have no hesitation in asserting, that no work of any art, in which this expression of infinity is possible, can be perfect, or supremely elevated without it, and that, in proportion to its presence, it will exalt and render impressive even the most tame and trivial themes. And I think if there be any one grand division, by which it is at all possible to set the productions of painting, so far as their mere plan or system is concerned, on our right and left hands, it is this of light and dark background, of heaven light or of object light. For I know not any truly great painter of any time, who manifests not the most intense pleasure in the luminous space of his backgrounds, or who ever sacrifices this pleasure where the nature of his subject admits of its attainment, as on the other hand I know not that the habitual use of dark backgrounds can be shown as having ever been co-existent with pure or high feeling, and, except in the case of Rembrandt (and then under peculiar circumstances only), with any high power of intellect. It is however, necessary carefully to observe the following modifications of this broad principle.

§ 6. Infinity how necessary in art.

The absolute necessity, for such I indeed consider it, is of no more than such a mere luminous distant point as may give to the feelings a species of escape from all the finite objects about them. There is a spectral etching of Rembrandt, a presentation of Christ in the temple, where the figure of a robed priest stands glaring by its gems out of the gloom, holding a crosier. Behind it there is a subdued window light seen in the opening between two columns, without which the impressiveness of the whole subject would, I think, be incalculably brought down. I cannot tell whether I am at present allowing too much weight to my own fancies and predilections, but without so much escape into the outer air and open heaven as this, I can take permanent pleasure in no picture.

§ 7. Conditions of its necessity.

And I think I am supported in this feeling by the unanimous practice, if not the confessed opinion, of all artists. The painter of portrait is unhappy without his conventional white stroke under the sleeve, or beside the arm-chair; the painter of interiors feels like a caged bird, unless he can throw a window open,

§ 8. And connected analogies.

or set the door ajar; the landscapist dares not lose himself in forest without a gleam of light under its farthest branches, nor ventures out in rain, unless he may somewhere pierce to a better promise in the distance, or cling to some closing gap of variable blue above; Escape, Hope, Infinity, by whatever Conventionalism sought, the desire is the same in all, the Instinct constant, it is no mere point of light that is wanted in the etching of Rembrandt above instanced, a gleam of armour or fold of temple curtain would have been utterly valueless, neither is it liberty, for though we cut down hedges and level hills, and give what waste and plain we choose, on the right hand and the left, it is all comfortless and undesired, so long as we cleave not a way of escape forward; and however narrow and thorny and difficult the nearer path, it matters not, so only that the clouds open for us at its close. Neither will any amount of beauty in nearer form, make us content to stay with it, so long as we are shut down to that alone, nor is any form so cold or so hurtful but that we may look upon it with kindness, so only that it rise against the infinite hope of light beyond. The reader can follow out the analogies of this unassisted.

§ 9. How the dignity of treatment is proportioned to the expression of infinity.

But although this narrow portal of escape be all that is absolutely necessary, I think that the dignity of the painting increases with the extent and amount of the expression. With the earlier and mightier painters of Italy, the practice is commonly to leave their distance of pure and open sky, of such simplicity that it in nowise shall interfere with or draw the attention from, the interest of the figures, and of such purity that, especially towards the horizon, it shall be in the highest degree expressive of the infinite space of heaven. I do not mean to say that they did this with any occult or metaphysical motives. They did it, I think, with the child-like, unpretending simplicity of all earnest men; they did what they loved and felt; they sought what the heart naturally seeks, and gave what it most gratefully receives; and I look to them as in all points of principle (not, observe, of knowledge or empirical attainment) as the most irrefragable authorities, precisely on account of the child-like innocence, which never deemed itself authoritative, but acted upon desire, and not upon dicta, and sought for sympathy, not for admiration.

§ 10. Examples among the Southern schools.

And so we find the same simple and sweet treatment, the open sky, the tender, unpretending, horizontal white clouds, the far winding and abundant landscape, in Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi, Laurati, Angelico, Benozzo, Ghirlandajo, Francia, Perugino, and the young Raphael, the first symptom of conventionality appearing in Perugino, who, though with intense feeling of light and colour he carried the glory of his luminous distance far beyond all his predecessors, began at the same time to use a somewhat morbid relief of his figures against the upper sky. Thus in the Assumption of the Florentine Academy, in that of l'Annunziata; and of the Gallery of Bologna, in all which pictures the lower portions are incomparably the finest, owing to the light distance behind the heads. Raphael, in his fall, betrayed the faith he had received from his father and his master, and substituted for the radiant sky of the Madonna del Cardellino, the chamber-wall of the Madonna della Sediola,—and the brown wainscot of the Baldacchino. Yet it is curious to observe how much of the dignity even of his later pictures, depends on such portions as the green light of the lake, and sky behind the rocks, in the St. John of the tribune, and how the repainted distortion of the Madonna dell' Impannata, is redeemed into something like elevated character, merely by the light of the linen window from which it takes its name.

§ 11. Among the Venetians.

That which by the Florentines was done in pure simplicity of heart, was done by the Venetians with intense love of the colour and splendour of the sky itself, even to the frequent sacrificing of their subject to the passion of its distance. In Carpaccio, John Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, and Tintoret, the preciousness of the luminous sky, so far as it might be at all consistent with their subject, is nearly constant; abandoned altogether in portraiture only, seldom even there, and never with advantage. Titian and Veronese, who had less exalted feeling than the others, affording a few instances of exception, the latter overpowering his silvery distances with foreground splendour, the other sometimes sacrificing them to a luscious fulness of colour, as in the Flagellation in the Louvre, by a comparison of which with the unequalled majesty of the Entombment opposite, the whole power and applicability of the general principle may at once be tested.

But of the value of this mode of treatment there is a further and more convincing proof than its adoption either by the innocence of the Florentine or the ardour of the Venetian, namely, that when retained or imitated from them by the landscape painters of the seventeenth century, when appearing in isolation from all other good, among the weaknesses and paltrinesses of Claude, the mannerisms of Gaspar, and the caricatures and brutalities of Salvator, it yet redeems and upholds all three, conquers all foulness by its purity, vindicates all folly by its dignity, and puts an uncomprehended power of permanent address to the human heart, upon the lips of the senseless and the profane.[1]

12. Among the painters of Landscape.

Now, although I doubt not that the general value of this treatment will be acknowledged by all lovers of art, it is not certain that the point to prove which I have brought it forward, will be as readily conceded, namely, the inherent power of all representations of infinity over the human heart; for there are, indeed, countless associations of pure and religious kind, which combine with each other to enhance the impression, when presented in this particular form, whose power I neither deny nor am careful to distinguish, seeing that they all tend to the same Divine point, and have reference to heavenly hopes; delights they are in seeing

§ 13. Other modes in which the power of infinity is felt.

[1] In one of the smaller rooms of the Pitti palace, over the door, is a temptation of St. Anthony, by Salvator, wherein such power as the artist possessed is fully manifested, with little, comparatively, that is offensive. It is a vigorous and ghastly thought, in that kind of horror which is dependent on scenic effect, perhaps unrivalled, and I shall have occasion to refer to it again in speaking of the powers of Imagination. I allude to it here, because the sky of the distance affords a remarkable instance of the power of light at present under discussion. It is formed of flakes of black cloud, with rents and openings of intense and lurid green, and at least half of the impressiveness of the picture depends on these openings. Close them, make the sky one mass of gloom, and the spectre will be awful no longer. It owes to the light of the distance both its size and its spirituality. The time would fail me, if I were to name the tenth part of the pictures which occur to me, whose vulgarity is redeemed by this circumstance alone, and yet let not the artist trust to such morbid and conventional use of it as may be seen in the common blue and yellow effectism of the present day. Of the value of moderation and simplicity in the use of this, as of all other sources of pleasurable emotion, I shall presently have occasion to speak farther.

the narrow, black, miserable earth fairly compared with the bright firmament, reachings forward unto the things that are before, and joyfulness in the apparent though unreachable nearness and promise of them. But there are other modes in which infinity may be represented, which are confused by no associations of the kind, and which would, as being in mere matter, appear trivial and mean, but for their incalculable influence on the forms of all that we feel to be beautiful. The first of these is the curvature of lines and surfaces, wherein it at first appears futile to insist upon any resemblance or suggestion of infinity, since there is certainly in our ordinary contemplation of it, no sensation of the kind: But I have repeated again and again that the ideas of beauty are instinctive, and that it is only upon consideration, and even then in doubtful and disputable way, that they appear in their typical character; neither do I intend at all to insist upon the particular meaning which they appear to myself to bear, but merely on their actual and demonstrable agreeableness, so that, in the present case, while I assert positively, and have no fear of being able to prove, that a curve of any kind is more beautiful than a right line, I leave it to the reader to accept or not, as he pleases, that reason of its agreeableness, which is the only one that I can at all trace, namely, that every curve divides itself infinitely by its changes of direction.

§ 14. The beauty of Curvature.

That all forms of acknowledged beauty are composed exclusively of curves will, I believe, be at once allowed; but that which there will be need more especially to prove is, the subtlety and constancy of curvature in all natural forms whatsoever. I believe that, except in crystals, in certain mountain forms admitted for the sake of sublimity or contrast, (as in the slope of debris), in rays of light, in the levels of calm water and alluvial land, and in some few organic developements, there are no lines nor surfaces of nature without curvature, though as we before saw in clouds, more especially in their under lines towards the horizon, and in vast and extended plains, right lines are often suggested which are not actual. Without these we could not be sensible of the value of the contrasting curves, and while, therefore, for the most part, the eye is fed in natural forms with a grace of curvature which no hand nor instrument can follow, other means are

§ 15. How constant in external Nature.

provided to give beauty to those surfaces which are admitted for contrast, as in water by its reflection of the gradations which it possesses not itself. In freshly-broken ground, which Nature has not yet had time to model, in quarries and pits which are none of her cutting, in those convulsions and evidences of convulsion, of whose influence on ideal landscape I shall presently have occasion to speak, and generally in all ruin and disease, and interference of one order of being with another (as in the cattle line of park trees), the curves vanish, and violently opposed or broken and unmeaning lines take their place.

§ 16. The Beauty of Gradation.

What curvature is to lines, gradation is to shades and colours. It is *their* infinity, and divides them into an infinite number of degrees. Absolutely, without gradation no natural surface can possibly be, except under circumstances of so rare conjunction as to amount to a lusus naturæ; for we have seen that few surfaces are without curvature, and every curved surface must be gradated by the nature of light, which is most intense when it impinges at the highest angle, and for the gradation of the few plane surfaces that exist, means are provided in local colour, aerial perspective, reflected lights, &c., from which it is but barely conceivable that they should ever escape. Hence for instances of the complete absence of gradation we must look to man's work, or to his disease and decrepitude. Compare the gradated colours of the rainbow with the stripes of a target, and the gradual concentration of the youthful blood in the cheek with an abrupt patch of rouge, or with the sharply drawn veining of old age.

§ 17. How found in Nature.

Gradation is so inseparable a quality of all natural shade and colour that the eye refuses in art to understand anything as either, which appears without it, while on the other hand nearly all the gradations of nature are so subtle and between degrees of tint so slightly separated, that no human hand can in any wise equal, or do anything more than suggest the idea of them. In proportion to the space over which gradation extends, and to its invisible subtlety, is its grandeur, and in proportion to its narrow limits and violent degrees, its vulgarity. In Correggio, it is morbid and vulgar in spite of its refinement of execution, because the eye is drawn to it, and it is made the most observable character of the picture, whereas

natural gradation is for ever escaping observation to that degree that the greater part of artists in working from nature see it not (except in certain of its marked developments), but either lay down such continuous lines and colours as are both disagreeable and impossible, or, receiving the necessity of gradation as a principle instead of a fact, use it in violently exaggerated measure, and so lose both the dignity of their own work, and by the constant dwelling of their eyes upon exaggerations, their sensibility to that of the natural forms. So that we find the majority of painters divided between the two evil extremes of insufficiency and affectation, and only a few of the greatest men capable of making gradation constant and yet extended over enormous spaces and within degrees of narrow difference, as in the body of a high light.

From the necessity of gradation results what is commonly given as a rule of art, though its authority as a rule obtains only from its being a fact of nature, that the extremes of high light and pure colour, can exist only in points. The common rules respecting sixths and eighths, held concerning light and shade, are entirely absurd and conventional; according to the subject and the effect of light, the greater part of the picture will be or ought to be light or dark, but that principle which is not conventional, is that of all light, however high, there is some part that is higher than the rest, and that of all colour, however pure, there is some part that is purer than the rest, and that generally of all shade, however deep, there is some part deeper than the rest, though this last fact is frequently sacrificed in art, owing to the narrowness of its means. But on the right gradation of focusing of light and colour depends in great measure, the value of both. Of this I have spoken sufficiently in pointing out the singular constancy of it in the works of Turner. Part II. Sect. II. Chap. II. § 17. And it is generally to be observed that even raw and valueless colour, if rightly and subtly gradated will in some measure stand for light, and that the most transparent and perfect hue will be in some measure unsatisfactory, if entirely unvaried. I believe the early skies of Raphael owe their luminousness more to their untraceable and subtle gradation than to inherent quality of hue.

§ 18. How necessary in Art.

Such are the expressions of infinity which we find in

creation, of which the importance is to be estimated, rather by their frequency than their distinctness. Let, however, the reader bear constantly in mind that I insist not on his accepting any interpretation of mine, but only on his dwelling so long on those objects, which he perceives to be beautiful as to determine whether the qualities to which I trace their beauty, be necessarily there or no. Farther expressions of infinity there are in the mystery of nature, and in some measure in her vastness, but these are dependent on our own imperfections, and therefore, though they produce sublimity, they are unconnected with beauty. For that which we foolishly call vastness is, rightly considered, not more wonderful, not more impressive, than that which we insolently call littleness, and the infinity of God is not mysterious, it is only unfathomable, not concealed, but incomprehensible, it is a clear infinity, the darkness of the pure unsearchable sea.

§ 19. Infinity not rightly implied by vastness.

CHAPTER VI

OF UNITY, OR THE TYPE OF THE DIVINE COMPREHENSIVENESS

"ALL things," says Hooker, "(God only excepted,) besides the nature which they have in themselves, receive externally some perfection from other things." Hence the appearance of separation or isolation in anything, and of self-dependence, is an appearance of imperfection: and all appearances of connection and brotherhood are pleasant and right, both as significative of perfection in the things united, and as typical of that Unity which we attribute to God, and of which our true conception is rightly explained and limited by Dr. Brown in his XCII. lecture; that Unity which consists not in his own singleness or separation, but in the necessity of his inherence in all things that be, without which no creature of any kind could hold existence for a moment. Which necessity of divine essence I think it better to speak of as Comprehensiveness, than as Unity; because Unity is often understood in the sense of Oneness or Singleness, instead of Universality; whereas the only Unity which by any means can become

§ 1. The general conception of divine Unity.

grateful or an object of hope to men, and whose types therefore in material things can be beautiful, is that on which turned the last words and prayer of Christ before his crossing of the Kidron brook. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee."

§ 2. The glory of all things is their Unity.

And so there is not any matter, nor any spirit, nor any creature, but it is capable of a unity of some kind with other creatures, and in that unity is its perfection and theirs, and a pleasure also for the beholding of all other creatures that can behold. So the Unity of Spirits is partly in their sympathy, and partly in their giving and taking, and always in their love, and these are their delight and their strength, for their strength is in their co-working and army fellowship, and their delight is in the giving and receiving of alternate and perpetual currents of good, their inseparable dependency on each other's being, and their essential and perfect depending on their Creator's: and so the unity of earthly creatures is their power and their peace, not like the dead and cold peace of undisturbed stones and solitary mountains, but the living peace of trust, and the living power of support, of hands that hold each other and are still: and so the unity of matter is, in its noblest form, the organization of it which builds it up into temples for the spirit, and in its lower form, the sweet and strange affinity, which gives to it the glory of its orderly elements, and the fair variety of change and assimilation that turns the dust into the crystal, and separates the waters that be above the firmament from the waters that be beneath, and in its lowest form, it is the working and walking and clinging together that gives their power to the winds, and its syllables and soundings to the air, and their weight to the waves, and their burning to the sunbeams, and their stability to the mountains, and to every creature whatsoever operation is for its glory and for others good.

Now of that which is thus necessary to the perfection of all things, all appearance, sign, type, or suggestion must be beautiful, in whatever matter it may appear. And so to the perfection of beauty in lines, or colours, or forms, or masses, or multitudes, the appearance of some species of Unity is in the most determined sense of the word essential.

But of the appearances of Unity, as of Unity itself, there are several kinds which it will be found hereafter convenient to consider separately. Thus there is the unity of different and separate things, subjected to one and the same influence, which may be called subjectional Unity, and this is the Unity of the Clouds, as they are driven by the parallel winds, or as they are ordered by the electric currents, and this the unity of the sea waves, and this of the bending and undulation of the forest masses, and in Creatures capable of will it is the Unity of Will or of Inspiration. And there is Unity of Origin, which we may call Original Unity, which is of things arising from one spring and source, and speaking always of this their brotherhood, and this in matter is the Unity of the branches of the trees, and of the petals and starry rays of flowers, and of the beams of light, and in spiritual creatures it is their filial relation to him from whom they have their being. And there is Unity of Sequence, which is that of things that form links in chains, and steps in ascents, and stages in journeys, and this, in matter, is the unity of communicable forces in their continuance from one thing to another, and it is the passing upwards and downwards of beneficent effects among all things, and it is the melody of sounds, and the beauty of continuous lines, and the orderly succession of motions and times. And in spiritual creatures it is their own constant building up by true knowledge and continuous reasoning to higher perfection, and the singleness and straight-forwardness of their tendencies to more complete communion with God. And there is the Unity of Membership, which we may call Essential Unity, which is the unity of things separately imperfect into a perfect whole, and this is the great Unity of which other unities are but parts and means, it is in matter the harmony of sounds and consistency of bodies, and among spiritual creatures, their love and happiness and very life in God.

§ 3. The several kind of Unity. Subjectional. Original. Of Sequence and of Membership.

Now of the nature of this last kind of unity, the most important whether in moral or in those material things with which we are at present concerned, there is this necessary to be observed, that it cannot exist between things similar to each other. Two or more equal and like things cannot be members

§ 4. Unity of Membership. How secured.

one of another, nor can they form one, or a whole thing. Two they must remain, both in nature and in our conception, so long as they remain alike, unless they are united by a third different from both. Thus the arms, which are like each other, remain two arms in our conception. They could not be united by a third arm, they must be united by something which is not an arm, and which, imperfect without them as they without it, shall form one perfect body; nor is unity even thus accomplished, without a difference and opposition of direction in the setting on of the like members. Therefore among all things, which are to have unity of membership one with another, there must be difference or variety, and though it is possible that many like things may be made members of one body, yet it is remarkable that this structure appears characteristic of the lower creatures, rather than the higher, as the many legs of the caterpillar, and the many arms and suckers of the radiata, and that, as we rise in order of being, the number of similar members becomes less, and their structure commonly seems based on the principle of the unity of two things by a third, as Plato has it in the Timæus, § 11.

§ 5. Variety. Why required.

Hence, out of the necessity of Unity, arises that of Variety, a necessity often more vividly, though never so deeply felt, because lying at the surface of things, and assisted by an influential principle of our nature, the love of change, and by the power of contrast. But it is a mistake which has led to many unfortunate results, in matters respecting art, to insist on any inherent agreeableness of variety, without reference to a farther end. For it is not even true that variety as such, and in its highest degree, is beautiful. A patched garment of many colours is by no means so agreeable as one of a single and continuous hue; the splendid colours of many birds are eminently painful from their violent separation, and inordinate variety, while the pure and colourless swan is under certain circumstances the most beautiful of all feathered creatures.[1] A forest of all manner of trees is poor, if not disagreeable in effect[2], a mass of one species of tree is sublime. It is therefore only harmonious and chordal variety, that variety which is necessary to secure and extend Unity

[1] Compare Chap. ix. § 5. note.

[2] Spenser's various forest is the Forest of Error.

(for the greater the number of objects, which by their differences become members of one another, the more extended and sublime is their Unity), which is rightly agreeable, and so I name not variety as essential to Beauty, because it is only so in a secondary and casual sense.[1]

§ 6. Change, and its influence on beauty.

Of the love of change as a principle of human nature, and the pleasantness of variety resulting from it, something has already been said (Ch. IV. § 4), only as there I was opposing the idea that our being familiar with objects was the cause of our delight in them, so here, I have to oppose the contrary position that their strangeness is the cause of it. For neither familiarity nor strangeness have more operation on, or connection with, impressions of one sense, than of another, and they have less power over the impressions of sense generally, than over the intellect in its joyful accepting of fresh knowledge, and dull contemplation of that it has long possessed. Only in their operation on the senses they act contrarily at different times, as for instance the newness of a dress or of some kind of unaccustomed food may make it for a time delightful, but as the novelty passes away, so also may the delight, yielding to disgust or indifference, which in their turn, as custom begins to operate, may pass into affection and craving, and that which was first a luxury, and then a matter of indifference, become a necessity[2]: whereas in subjects of the intellect, the chief delight they convey is dependent upon their being newly and vividly comprehended, and as they become subjects of contemplation they lose their value, and become tasteless and unregarded, except as instruments for the reaching of others,

[1] It must be matter of no small wonderment to practical men to observe how grossly the nature and connection of Unity and Variety have been misunderstood and misstated, by those writers upon taste, who have been guided by no experience of art: most singularly perhaps by Mr. Alison, who, confounding Unity with Uniformity, and leading his readers through thirty pages of discussion respecting Uniformity and Variety, the intelligibility of which is not by any means increased by his supposing Uniformity to be capable of existence in single things; at last substitutes for these two terms, sufficiently contradictory already, those of Similarity and Dissimilarity, the reconciliation of which opposites in one thing we must, I believe, leave Mr. Alison to accomplish.

[2] Καὶ τὸ ταὐτὰ πράττειν πολλάκις ἡδύ· ——τὸ γὰρ σύνηθες ἡδὺ ἦν. καὶ τὸ μεταβάλλειν ἡδύ· εἰς φύσιν γὰρ γίγνεται μεταβάλλειν.—Arist. Rhet. I. II. 20.

only that though they sink down into the shadowy, effectless, heap of things indifferent, which we pack, and crush down, and stand upon, to reach things new, they sparkle afresh at intervals as we stir them by throwing a new stone into the heap, and letting the newly admitted lights play upon them. And both in subjects of the intellect and the senses it is to be remembered that the love of change is a weakness and imperfection of our nature, and implies in it the state of probation, and that it is to teach us that things about us here are not meant for our continual possession or satisfaction, that ever such passion of change was put in us as that "custom lies upon us with a weight, heavy as frost, and deep almost as life," and only such weak back and baby grasp given to our intellect as that "the best things we do are painful, and the exercise of them grievous, being continued without intermission, so as in those very actions whereby we are especially perfected in this life we are not able to persist."

§ 7. The love of change. How morbid and evil.

And so it will be found that they are the weakest-minded and the hardest-hearted men that most love variety and change, for the weakest-minded are those who both wonder most at things new, and digest worst things old, in so far that everything they have lies rusty, and loses lustre for want of use, neither do they make any stir among their possessions, nor look over them to see what may be made of them, nor keep any great store, nor are householders with storehouses of things new and old, but they catch at the new-fashioned garments, and let the moth and thief look after the rest; and the hardest-hearted men are those that least feel the endearing and binding power of custom, and hold on by no cords of affection to any shore, but drive with the waves that cast up mire and dirt. And certainly it is not to be held that the perception of beauty and desire of it, are greatest in the hardest heart and weakest brain; but the love of variety is so, and therefore variety can be no cause of the beautiful, except, as I have said, when it is necessary for the perception of unity, neither is there any better test of that which is indeed beautiful than its surviving or annihilating the love of change; a test which the best judges of art have need frequently to use; and the wisest of them will use it always, for there is much in art that surprises by its brilliancy, or attracts by its singularity, that can hardly but by course of

time, though assuredly it will by course of time, be winnowed away from the right and real beauty whose retentive power is for ever on the increase, a bread of the soul for which the hunger is continual.

§ 8. The conducing of variety towards Unity of Subjection,

Receiving, therefore, variety only as that which accomplishes unity, or makes it perceived, its operation is found to be very precious, both in that which I have called Unity of Subjection, and Unity of Sequence, as well as in Unity of Membership; for although things in all respects the same may, indeed, be subjected to one influence, yet the power of the influence, and their obedience to it, is best seen by varied operation of it on their individual differences, as in Clouds and Waves there is a glorious Unity of rolling, wrought out by the wild and wonderful differences of their absolute forms, which, if taken away, would leave in them only multitudinous and petty repetition, instead of the majestic oneness of shared passion. And so in the waves and clouds of human multitude when they are filled with one thought, as we find frequently in the works of the early Italian men of earnest purpose, who despising, or happily ignorant of, the sophistications of theories, and the proprieties of composition, indicated by perfect similarity of action and gesture on the one hand, and by the infinite and truthful variation of expression on the other, the most sublime strength, because the most absorbing unity, of multitudinous passion that ever human heart conceived. Hence, in the cloister of St. Mark's, the intense, fixed, statue-like silence of ineffable adoration upon the spirits in prison at the feet of Christ, side by side, the hands lifted, and the knees bowed, and the lips trembling together[1]; and in St. Domenico of Fiesole[2], that whirlwind rush of the Angels and the redeemed souls round about him at his resurrection, so that we hear the blast of

[1] Fra Angelico's fresco, in a cell of the upper cloister. He treated the subject frequently. Another characteristic example occurs in the Vita di Christo of the Academy, a series now unfortunately destroyed by the picture cleaners. Simon Memmi in Santa Maria Novella (Chapelle des Espagnols) has given another very beautiful instance. In Giotto the principle is universal, though his multitudes are somewhat more dramatically and powerfully varied in gesture than Angelico's. In Mino da Fiesole's altar-piece in the church of St. Ambrogio at Florence, close by Cosimo Rosselli's fresco, there is a beautiful example in marble.

[2] The Predella of the picture behind the altar.

the horizontal trumpets mixed with the dying clangour of their ingathered wings. The same great feeling occurs throughout the works of the serious men, though most intensely in Angelico, and it is well to compare with it the vileness and falseness of all that succeeded, when men had begun to bring to the cross foot their systems instead of their sorrow. Take as the most marked and degraded instance, perhaps, to be anywhere found, Bronzino's treatment of the same subject (Christ visiting the spirits in prison), in the picture now in the Tuscan room of the Uffizii, which, vile as it is in colour, vacant in invention, void in light and shade, a heap of cumbrous nothingness, and sickening offensivenesses, is of all its voids most void in this, that the academy models therein huddled together at the bottom, show not so much unity or community of attention to the academy model with the flag in its hand above, as a street crowd would to a fresh-staged charlatan. Some *point* to the God who has burst the gates of death, as if the rest were incapable of distinguishing him for themselves, and others turn their backs upon him, to show their unagitated faces to the spectator.

§ 9. And towards Unity of Sequence.

In Unity of Sequence, the effect of Variety is best exemplified by the melodies of music, wherein by the differences of the notes, they are connected with each other in certain pleasant relations. This connection taking place in quantities, is Proportion, respecting which certain general principles must be noted, as the subject is one open to many errors, and obscurely treated of by writers on art.

§ 10. The nature of Proportion. 1st. of apparent Proportion.

Proportion is of two distinct kinds. Apparent: when it takes place between quantities for the sake of connection only, without any ultimate object or casual necessity; and Constructive: when it has reference to some function to be discharged by the quantities, depending on their proportion. From the confusion of these two kinds of proportion have arisen the greater part of the erroneous conceptions of the influence of either.

Apparent proportion, or the sensible relation of quantities, is one of the most important means of obtaining unity between things which otherwise must have remained distinct in similarity, and as it may consist with every other kind of

unity, and persist when every other means of it fails, it may be considered as lying at the root of most of our impressions of the beautiful. There is no sense of rightness, or wrongness connected with it, no sense of utility, propriety, or expediency. These ideas enter only where the proportion of quantities has reference to some function to be performed by them. It cannot be asserted that it is right or that it is wrong that A should be to B, as B to C; unless A, B, and C have some desirable operation dependent on that relation. But nevertheless it may be highly agreeable to the eye that A, B, and C, if visible things, should have visible connection of ratio, even though nothing be accomplished by such connection. On the other hand, constructive proportion, or the adaptation of quantities to functions, is agreeable, not to the eye, but to the mind, which is cognizant of the function to be performed. Thus the pleasantness or rightness of the proportions of a column depends not on the mere relation of diameter and height (which is not proportion at all, for proportion is between three terms at least,) but on three other involved terms, the strength of materials, the weight to be borne, and the scale of the building. The proportions of a wooden column are wrong in a stone one, and of a stone building wrong in a large one[1], and this

[1] It seems never to have been rightly understood, even by the more intelligent among our architects, that Proportion is in any way connected with positive size; it seems to be held among them that a small building may be expanded to a large one merely by proportionally expanding all its parts: and that the harmony will be equally agreeable on whatever scale it be rendered. Now this is true of apparent proportion, but utterly false of constructive; and, as much of the value of architectural proportion is constructive, the error is often productive of the most painful results. It may be best illustrated by observing the conditions of proportion in animals. Many persons have thoughtlessly claimed admiration for the strength—supposed gigantic—of insects and smaller animals; as being capable of lifting weights, leaping distances, and surmounting obstacles, of proportion apparently overwhelming. Thus the Formica Herculanea will lift in its mouth, and brandish like a baton, sticks thicker than itself and six times its length, all the while scrambling over crags of about the proportionate height of the Cliffs of Dover, three or four in a minute. There is nothing extraordinary in this, nor any exertion of strength necessarily greater than human, in proportion to the size of the body. For it is evident that if the size and strength of any creature be expanded or diminished in proportion to each other, the distance through which it can leap, the time it can maintain exertion, or any other third term resultant, remains constant; that is, diminish weight of powder and of ball proportionately, and the distance carried

owing solely to mechanical considerations, which have no more connection with ideas of beauty, than the relation

is constant, or nearly so. Thus, a grasshopper, a man, and a giant 100 feet high, supposing their muscular strength equally proportioned to their size, can or could all leap, not proportionate distance, but the same or nearly the same distance—say, four feet the grasshopper, or forty-eight times his length; six feet the man or his length exactly; ten feet the giant or the tenth of his length. Hence all small animals can, *cæteris paribus*, perform feats of strength and agility, exactly so much greater than those to be executed by large ones, as the animals themselves are smaller; and to enable an elephant to leap like a grasshopper, he must be endowed with strength a million times greater in *proportion* to his size. Now the consequence of this general mechanical law is, that as we increase the scale of animals, their means of power, whether muscles of motion or bones of support, must be increased in a more than proportionate degree, or they become utterly unwieldy and incapable of motion;—and there is a limit to this increase of strength. If the elephant had legs as long as a spider's, no combination of animal matter that could be hide-bound would have strength enough to move them: to support the megatherium, we must have a humerus a foot in diameter, though perhaps not more than two feet long, and that in a vertical position under him, while the gnat can hang on the window frame, and poise himself to sting, in the middle of crooked stilts like threads; stretched out to ten times the breadth of his body on each side. Increase the size of the megatherium a little more, and no phosphate of lime will bear him: he would crush his own legs to powder. (Compare Sir Charles Bell (Bridgewater Treatise on the Hand), p. 296, and the note.) Hence there is not only a limit to the size of animals, in the conditions of matter, but to their activity also, the largest being always least capable of exertion; and this would be the case to a far greater extent, but that nature beneficently alters her proportions as she increases her scale; giving, as we have seen, long legs and enormous wings to the smaller tribes, and short and thick proportion to the larger. So in vegetables—compare the stalk of an ear of oat, and the trunk of a pine, the mechanical relations being in both the same. So also in waves, of which the large never can be mere exaggerations of the small, but have different slopes and curvatures: so in mountains, and all things else, necessarily, and from ordinary mechanical laws. Whence in architecture, according to the scale of the building, its proportions must be altered; and I have no hesitation in calling that unmeaning exaggeration of parts in St. Peter's, of flutings, volutes, friezes, &c., in the proportions of a smaller building, a vulgar blunder, and one that destroys all the majesty that the building ought to have had—and still more I should so call all imitations and adaptations of large buildings on a small scale. The true test of right proportion is that it shall itself inform us of the scale of the building, and be such that even in a drawing it shall instantly induce the conception of the actual size or, size intended. I know not what Fuseli means by that aphorism of his:—

"Disproportion of parts is the element of hugeness—proportion, of

between the arms of a lever, adapted to the raising of a given weight; and yet it is highly agreeable to perceive that such constructive proportion has been duly observed, as it is agreeable to see that anything is fit for its purpose or for ours, and also that it has been the result of intelligence in the workman of it, so that we sometimes feel a pleasure in apparent non-adaptation, if it be a sign of ingenuity; as in the unnatural and seemingly impossible lightness of Gothic spires and roofs.

Now, the errors against which I would caution the reader in this matter are three. The first, is the overlooking or denial of the power of Apparent proportion, of which power neither Burke nor any other writer whose works I have met with, take cognizance. The second, is the attribution of *beauty* to the appearances of constructive proportion. The third, the denial with Burke of *any* value or agreeableness in constructive proportion.

Now, the full proof of the influence of apparent proportion, I must reserve for illustration by diagram, one or two instances however may be given at present for the better understanding of its nature.

§ 11. The value of Apparent Proportion in Curvature.

We have already asserted that all curves are more beautiful than right lines. All curves, however, are not equally beautiful, and their differences of beauty depend on the different proportions borne to each other by those infinitely small right lines of which they may be conceived as composed.

When these lines are equal and contain equal angles, there can be no connection nor unity of sequence in them. The resulting curve, the circle, is therefore the least beautiful of all curves.

When the lines bear to each other some certain proportion; or when, the lines remaining equal, the angles vary; or when by any means whatsoever, and in whatever complicated modes, such differences as shall imply connection are established between the infinitely small segments, the resulting curves become beautiful. The simplest of the beautiful

grandeur. All Gothic styles of Architecture are huge. The Greek alone is grand."

When a building *is* vast, it ought to look so; and the proportion is right which exhibits its vastness. Nature loses no size by her proportion; her buttressed mountains have more of Gothic than of Greek in them.

curves are the conic, and the various spirals; but it is as rash as it is difficult to endeavour to trace any ground of superiority or inferiority among the infinite numbers of the higher curves. I believe that almost all are beautiful in their own nature, and that their comparative beauty depends on the constant quantities involved in their equations. Of this point I shall speak hereafter at greater length.

§ 12. How by nature obtained.

The universal forces of nature, and the individual energies of the matter submitted to them, are so appointed and balanced, that they are continually bringing out curves of this kind in all visible forms, and that circular lines become nearly impossible under any circumstances. The gradual acceleration, for instance, of velocity, in streams that descend from hill-sides, as it gradually increases their power of erosion increases in the same gradual degree the rate of curvature in the descent of the slope, until at a certain degree of steepness this descent meets, and is concealed by the right line of the detritus. The junction of this right line with the plain is again modified by the farther bounding of the larger blocks, and by the successively diminishing proportion of landslips caused by erosion at the bottom, so that the whole line of the hill is one of curvature, first, gradually increasing in rapidity to the maximum steepness of which the particular rock is capable, and then decreasing in a decreasing ratio, until it arrives at the plain level. This type of form, modified of course more or less by the original boldness of the mountain, and dependent both on its age, its constituent rock, and the circumstances of its exposure, is yet in its general formula applicable to all. So the curves of all things in motion, and of all organic forms, most rudely and simply in the shell spirals, and in their most complicated in the muscular lines of the higher animals.

This influence of apparent proportion, a proportion, be it observed, which has no reference to ultimate ends, but which is itself, seemingly, the end and object of operation in many of the forces of nature, is therefore at the root of all our delight in any beautiful form whatsoever. For no form can be beautiful which is not composed of curves whose unity is secured by relations of this kind.

Not only however in curvature, but in all associations of lines whatsoever, it is desirable that there should be

reciprocal relation, and the eye is unhappy without perception of it. It is utterly vain to endeavour to reduce this proportion to finite rules, for it is as various as musical melody, and the laws to which it is subject are of the same general kind, so that the determination of right or wrong proportion is as much a matter of feeling and experience as the appreciation of good musical composition, not but that there is a science of both, and principles which may not be infringed, but that within these limits the liberty of invention is infinite, and the degrees of excellence infinite also, whence the curious error of Burke in imagining that because he could not fix upon some one given proportion of lines as better than any other, therefore proportion had no value nor influence at all, which is the same as to conclude that there is no such thing as melody in music, because there are melodies more than one.

§ 13. Apparent proportion in melodies of lines.

The argument of Burke on this subject is summed up in the following words:—"Examine the head of a beautiful horse, find what proportion that bears to his body and to his limbs, and what relations these have to each other, and when you have settled these proportions, as a standard of beauty, then take a dog or cat, or any other animal, and examine how far the same proportions between their heads and their necks, between those and the body, and so on, are found to hold; I think we may safely say, that they differ in every species, yet that there are individuals found in a great many species, so differing, that have a very striking beauty. Now if it be allowed that very different, and even contrary, forms and dispositions, are consistent with beauty, it amounts, I believe, to a concession, that no certain measures operating from a natural principle are necessary to produce it, at least so far as the brute species is concerned."

§ 14. Error of Burke in this matter.

In this argument there are three very palpable fallacies: the first is, the rough application of measurement to the heads, necks, and limbs, without observing the subtle differences of proportion and position of parts in the members themselves, for it would be strange if the different adjustment of the ears and brow in the dog and horse, did not require a harmonizing difference of adjustment in the head and neck. The second fallacy is that above specified, the

supposition that proportion cannot be beautiful if susceptible of variation, whereas the whole meaning of the term has reference to the adjustment and functional correspondence of infinitely variable quantities. And the third error is the oversight of the very important fact, that, although "different and even contrary forms and dispositions are consistent with beauty," they are by no means consistent with equal *degrees* of beauty, so that, while we find in all the presence of such proportion and harmony of form, as gifts them with positive agreeableness consistent with the station and dignity of each, we perceive, also, such superiority of proportion in some (as the horse, eagle, lion, and man for instance) as may best be in harmony with the nobler functions and more exalted powers of the animals.

§ 15. Constructive Proportion. Its influence in plants.

And this allowed superiority of some animal forms to others is, in itself, argument against the second error above named, that of attributing the sensation of beauty to the perception of Expedient or constructive proportion. For everything that God has made, is equally well constructed with reference to its intended functions. But all things are not equally beautiful. The Megatherium is absolutely as well proportioned, with the view of adaptation of parts to purposes, as the Horse or the Swan; but by no means so handsome as either. The fact is, that the perception of expediency of proportion can but rarely affect our estimates of beauty, for it implies a knowledge which we very rarely and imperfectly possess, and the want of which we tacitly acknowledge.

Let us consider that instance of the proportion of the stalk of a plant to its head, given by Burke. In order to judge of the expediency of this proportion, we must know, First, the scale of the plant (for the smaller the scale, the longer the stem may safely be). Secondly, the toughness of the materials of the stem and the mode of their mechanical structure. Thirdly, the specific gravity of the head. Fourthly, the position of the head which the nature of fructification requires. Fifthly, the accidents and influences to which the situation for which the plant was created is exposed. Until we know all this, we cannot say that proportion or disproportion exists, and because we cannot know all this, the idea of expedient proportion enters but

slightly into our impression of vegetable beauty, but rather, since the existence of the plant proves that these proportions have been observed, and we know that nothing but our own ignorance prevents us from perceiving them, we take the proportion on credit, and are delighted by the variety of results which the Divine intelligence has attained in the various involutions of these quantities, and perhaps most when, to outward appearance, such proportions have been violated; more by the slenderness of the campanula than the security of the pine.

§ 16. And animals.

What is obscure in plants is utterly incomprehensible in animals, owing to the greater number of means employed and functions performed. To judge of expedient proportion in them, we must know all that each member has to do, all its bones, all its muscles, and the amount of nervous energy communicable to them; and yet, forasmuch as we have more experience and instinctive sense of the strength of muscles than of wood, and more practical knowledge of the use of a head or a foot than of a flower or a stem, we are much more likely to presume upon our judgment respecting proportions here, we are very apt to assert that the plesiosaurus and camelopard have necks too long, that the turnspit has legs too short, and the elephant a body too ponderous.

But the painfulness arising from the idea of this being the case is occasioned partly by our sympathy with the animal, partly by our false apprehension of incompletion in the Divine work[1], nor in either case has it any connection with impressions of that typical beauty of which we are at present speaking; though some, perhaps, with that vital beauty which will hereafter come under discussion.

I wish therefore the reader to hold, respecting proportion generally,

§ 17. Summary.

1st. That Apparent proportion, or the melodious connection of quantities, is a cause of unity, and therefore one of the sources of all beautiful form.

2ndly, That Constructive proportion is agreeable to the mind when it is known or supposed, and that its seeming absence is painful in a like degree, but that this pleasure

[1] For the just and severe reproof of which, compare Sir Charles Bell (on the hand), p. 31, 32.

and pain have nothing in common with those dependent on Ideas of Beauty.

Farther illustrations of the value of Unity, I shall reserve for our detailed examination, as the bringing them forward here would interfere with the general idea of the subject-matter of the theoretic faculty which I wish succinctly to convey.

CHAPTER VII

OF REPOSE, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE PERMANENCE

§ 1. Universal feeling respecting the necessity of repose in art. It sources.

THERE is probably no necessity more imperatively felt by the artist, no test more unfailing of the greatness of artistical treatment, than that of the appearance of repose, and yet there is no quality whose semblance in mere matter is more difficult to define or illustrate. Nevertheless, I believe that our instinctive love of it, as well as the cause to which I attribute that love (although here also, as in the former cases, I contend not for the interpretation, but for the fact), will be readily allowed by the reader. As opposed to passion, changefulness, or laborious exertion, Repose is the especial and separating characteristic of the eternal mind and power; it is the "I am" of the Creator opposed to the "I become" of all creatures; it is the sign alike of the supreme knowledge which is incapable of surprise, the supreme power which is incapable of labour, the supreme volition which is incapable of change; it is the stillness of the beams of the eternal chambers laid upon the variable waters of ministering creatures; and as we saw before that the infinity which was a Type of the Divine nature on the one hand, became yet more desirable on the other from its peculiar address to our prison hopes, and to the expectations of an unsatisfied and unaccomplished existence, so the types of this third attribute of the Deity might seem to have been rendered farther attractive to mortal instinct, through the infliction upon the fallen creature of a curse necessitating a labour once unnatural and still most painful, so that the desire of rest planted in the heart is no sensual nor unworthy

one, but a longing for renovation and for escape from a state whose every phase is mere preparation for another equally transitory, to one in which permanence shall have become possible through perfection. Hence the great call of Christ to men, that call on which St. Augustine fixed as the essential expression of Christian hope, is accompanied by the promise of rest[1]; and the death bequest of Christ to men is peace.

§ 2. Repose, how expressed in matter.

Repose, as it is expressed in material things, is either a simple appearance of permanence and quietness, as in the massy forms of a mountain or rock, accompanied by the lulling effect of all mighty sight and sound, which all feel and none define (it would be less sacred if more explicable),

εὕδουσιν δ' ὀρέων κορυφαί τε καὶ φάραγγες,

or else it is repose proper, the rest of things in which there is vitality or capability of motion actual or imagined; and with respect to these the expression of repose is greater in proportion to the amount and sublimity of the action which is not taking place, as well as to the intensity of the negation of it. Thus we speak not of repose in a stone, because the motion of a stone has nothing in it of energy nor vitality, neither its repose of stability. But having once seen a great rock come down a mountain side, we have a noble sensation of its rest, now bedded immoveably among the fern, because the power and fearfulness of its motion were great, and its stability and negation of motion are now great in proportion. Hence the imagination, which delights in nothing more than in the enhancing of the characters of repose, effects this usually by either attributing to things visibly energetic an ideal stability, or to things visibly stable an ideal activity or vitality. Hence Wordsworth, of the Cloud, which in itself having too much of changefulness for his purpose, is spoken of as one "that heareth not the loud winds when they call, and moveth altogether, if it move at all." And again of children, which, that it may remove from them the child restlessness, the imagination conceives as rooted flowers "beneath an old grey oak, as violets, lie." On the other hand, the scattered rocks, which have not, as such,

[1] Matt. xi. 28.

vitality enough for rest, are gifted with it by the living image: they "lie couched around us like a flock of sheep."

Thus, as we saw that unity demanded for its expression what at first might have seemed its contrary (variety) so repose demands for its expression the implied capability of its opposite, energy, and this even in its lower manifestations, in rocks and stones and trees. By comparing the modes in which the mind is disposed to regard the boughs of a fair and vigorous tree, motionless in the summer air, with the effect produced by one of the same boughs hewn square and used for threshold or lintel, the reader will at once perceive the connection of vitality with repose, and the part they both bear in beauty.

§ 3. The necessity to repose of an implied energy.

But that which in lifeless things ennobles them by seeming to indicate life, ennobles higher creatures by indicating the exaltation of their earthly vitality into a Divine vitality; and raising the life of sense into the life of faith,—faith, whether we receive it in the sense of adherence to resolution, obedience to law, regardfulness of promise, in which from all time it has been the test as the shield, of the true being and life of man, or in the still higher sense of trustfulness in the presence, kindness, and word of God; in which form it has been exhibited under the Christian dispensation. For whether in one or other form, whether the faithfulness of men whose path is chosen and portion fixed, in the following and receiving of that path and portion, as in the Thermopylæ camp; or the happier faithfulness of children in the good giving of their Father, and of subjects in the conduct of their King, as in the "Stand still and see the salvation of God" of the Red Sea shore, there is rest and peacefulness, the "standing still," in both, the quietness of action determined, of spirit unalarmed, of expectation unimpatient: beautiful, even when based only as of old, on the self-command and self-possession, the persistent dignity or the uncalculating love of the creature[1], but more beautiful yet

§ 4. Mental repose. How noble.

[1] The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity
Inward and outward, humble, yet sublime.
The life where hope and memory are as one.

when the rest is one of humility instead of pride, and the trust no more in the resolution we have taken, but in the hand we hold.

§ 5. Its universal value as a test of art.

Hence I think that there is no desire more intense or more exalted than that which exists in all rightly disciplined minds for the evidences of repose in external signs, and what I cautiously said respecting infinity, I say fearlessly respecting repose, that no work of art can be great without it, and that all art is great in proportion to the appearance of it. It is the most unfailing test of beauty, whether of matter or of motion, nothing can be ignoble that possesses it, nothing right that has it not, and in strict proportion to its appearance in the work is the majesty of mind to be inferred in the artificer. Without regard to other qualities, we may look to this for our evidence, and by the search for this alone we may be led to the rejection of all that is base, and the accepting of all that is good and great, for the Paths of Wisdom are all peace. We shall see by this light, three colossal images standing up side by side, looming in their great rest of spirituality above the whole World horizon, Phidias, Michael Angelo, and Dante, and then, separated from their great religious thrones only by less fulness and earnestness of Faith, Homer and Shakspeare, and from these we may go down step by step among the mighty men of every age, securely and certainly observant of diminished lustre in every appearance of restlessness and effort, until the last trace of true inspiration vanishes in tottering affectations or tortured insanities of modern times. There is no art, no pursuit, whatsoever, but its results may be classed by this test alone, everything of evil is betrayed and winnowed away by it, glitter and confusion, and glare of colour, inconsistency or absence of thought, forced expression, evil

> Earth quiet and unchanged; the human soul
> Consistent in selfrule; and heaven revealed
> To meditation, in that quietness.
> WORDSWORTH, Excursion, Book iii.

But compare carefully (for this is put into the mouth of one diseased in thought and erring in seeking) the opening of the ninth book; and observe the difference between the mildew of inaction—the slumber of Death; and the patience of the Saints—the rest of the Sabbath Eternal. (Rev. xiv. 13.)

choice of subject, over accumulation of materials, whether in painting or literature, the shallow and unreflecting nothingness of the English schools of art, the strained and disgusting horrors of the French, the distorted feverishness of the German :—pretence, over decoration, over division of parts in architecture, and again in music, in acting, in dancing, in whatsoever art, great or mean, there are yet degrees of greatness or meanness entirely dependent on this single quality of repose.

§ 6. Instances in the Laocoon and Theseus.

Particular instances are at present both needless and cannot but be inadequate ; needless, because I suppose that every reader, however limited his experience of art, can supply many for himself, and inadequate, because no number of them could illustrate the full extent of the influence of the expression. I believe, however, that by comparing the disgusting convulsions of the Laocoon with the Elgin Theseus, we may obtain a general idea of the effect of the influence, as shown by its absence in one, and presence in the other, of two works which, as far as artistical merit is concerned, are in some measure parallel, not that I believe, even in this respect, the Laocoon is justifiably comparable with the Theseus. I suppose that no group has exercised so pernicious an influence on art as this, a subject ill chosen, meanly conceived and unnaturally treated, recommended to imitation by subtleties of execution and accumulation of technical knowledge.[1]

[1] I would also have the reader compare with the meagre lines and contemptible tortures of the Laocoon, the awfulness and quietness of M. Angelo's treatment of a subject in most respects similar (the plague of the Fiery Serpents), but of which the choice was justified both by the place which the event holds in the typical system he had to arrange, and by the grandeur of the plague itself, in its multitudinous grasp, and its mystical salvation ; sources of sublimity entirely wanting to the slaughter of the Dardan priest. It is good to see how his gigantic intellect reaches after repose, and truthfully finds it, in the falling hand of the near figure, and in the deathful decline of that whose hands are held up even in their venomed coldness to the cross ; and though irrelevant to our present purpose, it is well also to note how the grandeur of this treatment results, not merely from choice, but from a greater knowledge and more faithful rendering of truth. For whatever knowledge of the human frame there may be in the Laocoon, there is certainly none of the habits of serpents. The fixing of the snake's head in the side of the principal figure is as false to nature as it is poor in composition of line. A large serpent never wants to bite, it wants to hold, it

In Christian art, it would be well to compare the feeling of the finer among the altar tombs of the middle ages, with any monumental works after Michael Angelo, perhaps more especially with works of Roubilliac or Canova.

§ 7. And in altar tombs.

In the Cathedral of Lucca, near the entrance door of the north transept, there is a monument Jacopo della Quercia's to Ilaria di Caretto, the wife of Paolo Guinigi. I name it not as more beautiful or perfect than other examples of the same period, but as furnishing an instance of the exact and right mean between the rigidity and rudeness of the earlier monumental effigies, and the morbid imitation of life, sleep, or death, of which the fashion has taken place in modern times.[1] She is lying on a simple couch with

seizes therefore always where it can hold best, by the extremities, or throat, it seizes once and for ever, and that before it coils, following up the seizure with the twist of its body round the victim, as invisibly swift as the twist of a whiplash round any hard object it may strike, and then it holds fast, never moving the jaws or the body; if the prey has any power of struggling left, it throws round another coil, without quitting the hold with the jaws; if Laocoon had had to do with real serpents, instead of pieces of tape with heads to them, he would have been held still, and not allowed to throw his arms or legs about. It is most instructive to observe the accuracy of Michael Angelo in the rendering of these circumstances; the binding of the arms to the body, and the knotting of the whole mass of agony together, until we hear the crashing of the bones beneath the grisly sliding of the engine folds. Note also the expression in all the figures of another circumstance, the torpor and cold numbness of the limbs induced by the serpent venom, which, though justifiably overlooked by the sculptor of the Laocoon, as well as by Virgil—in consideration of the rapidity of the death by crushing, adds infinitely to the power of the Florentine's conception, and would have been better hinted by Virgil, than that sickening distribution of venom on the garlands. In fact, Virgil has missed both of truth and impressiveness every way—the "morsu depascitur" is unnatural butchery—the "perfusus veneno" gratuitous foulness—the "clamores horrendos," impossible degradation; compare carefully the remarks on this statue in Sir Charles Bell's Essay on Expression, (third edition, p. 192) where he has most wisely and incontrovertibly deprived the statue of all claim to expression of energy and fortitude of mind, and shown its common and coarse intent of mere bodily exertion and agony, while he has confirmed Payne Knight's just condemnation of the passage in Virgil.

If the reader wishes to see the opposite or imaginative view of the subject, let him compare Winckelmann; and Schiller, Letters on Aesthetic Culture.

[1] Whenever, in monumental work, the sculptor reaches a deceptive appearance of life or death, or of concomitant details, he has gone too

a hound at her feet, not on the side, but with the head laid straight and simply on the hard pillow, in which, let it be observed, there is no effort at deceptive imitation of pressure. It is understood as a pillow, but not mistaken for one. The hair is bound in a flat braid over the fair brow, the sweet and arched eyes are closed, the tenderness of the loving lips is set and quiet, there is that about them which forbids breath, something which is not death nor sleep, but the pure image of both. The hands are not lifted in prayer, neither folded, but the arms are laid at length upon the body, and the hands cross as they fall. The feet are hidden by the drapery, and the forms of the limbs concealed, but not their tenderness.

If any of us, after staying for a time beside this tomb, could see through his tears, one of the vain and unkind encumbrances of the grave, which, in these hollow and heartless days, feigned sorrow builds to foolish pride, he would, I believe, receive such a lesson of love as no coldness could refuse, no fatuity forget, and no insolence disobey.

far. The statue should be felt for such, not look like a dead or sleeping body; it should not convey the impression of a corpse, nor of sick and outwearied flesh, but it should be the marble *image* of death or weariness. So the concomitants should be distinctly marble, severe and monumental in their lines, not shroud, not bed-clothes, not actual armour nor brocade, not a real soft pillow, not a downright hard stuffed mattrass, but the mere type and suggestion of these: a certain rudeness and incompletion of finish is very noble in all. Not that they are to be unnatural, such lines as are given should be pure and true, and clear of the hardness and mannered rigidity of the strictly Gothic types, but lines so few and grand as to appeal to the imagination only, and always to stop short of realization. There is a monument put up lately by a modern Italian sculptor in one of the side chapels of Santa Croce, the face fine and the execution dexterous. But it looks as if the person had been restless all night, and the artist admitted to a faithful study of the disturbed bed-clothes in the morning.

CHAPTER VIII

OF SYMMETRY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE JUSTICE

§ 1. Symmetry, what, and how found in organic nature.

We shall not be long detained by the consideration of this, the fourth constituent of beauty, as its nature is universally felt and understood. In all perfectly beautiful objects, there is found the opposition of one part to another and a reciprocal balance obtained; in animals the balance being commonly between opposite sides (note the disagreeableness occasioned by the exception in flat fish, having the eyes on one side of the head), but in vegetables the opposition is less distinct, as in the boughs on opposite sides of trees, and the leaves and sprays on each side of the boughs, and in dead matter less perfect still, often amounting only to a certain tendency towards a balance, as in the opposite sides of valleys and alternate windings of streams. In things in which perfect symmetry is from their nature impossible or improper, a balance must be at least in some measure expressed before they can be beheld with pleasure.

§ 2. How necessary in art.

Hence the necessity of what artists require as opposing lines or masses in composition, the propriety of which, as well as their value, depends chiefly on their inartificial and natural invention. Absolute equality is not required, still less absolute similarity. A mass of subdued colour may be balanced by a point of a powerful one, and a long and latent line overpowered by a short and conspicuous one. The only error against which it is necessary to guard the reader with respect to symmetry, is the confounding it with proportion, though it seems strange that the two terms could ever have been used as synonymous. Symmetry is the *opposition* of *equal* quantities to each other. Proportion the *connection* of *unequal* quantities with each other. The property of a tree in sending out equal boughs on opposite sides is symmetrical. Its sending out shorter and smaller towards the top, proportional. In the human face its balance of opposite sides is symmetry, its division upwards, proportion.

Whether the agreeableness of symmetry be in any way referable to its expression of the Aristotelian ἰσότης, that is to say of abstract justice, I leave the reader to determine I only assert respecting it, that it is necessary to the dignity of every form, and that by the removal of it we shall render the other elements of beauty comparatively ineffectual: though on the other hand, it is to be observed that it is rather a mode of arrangement of qualities than a quality itself; and hence symmetry has little power over the mind, unless all the other constituents of beauty be found together with it. A form may be symmetrical and ugly, as many Elizabethan ornaments, and yet not so ugly as it had been if unsymmetrical, but bettered always by increasing degrees of symmetry; as in star figures, wherein there is a circular symmetry of many like members, whence their frequent use for the plan and ground of ornamental designs; so also it is observable that foliage in which the leaves are concentrically grouped, as in the chestnuts, and many shrubs—rhododendrons, for instance (whence the perfect beauty of the Alpine rose)—is far nobler in its effect than any other, so that the sweet chestnut of all trees most fondly and frequently occurs in the landscape of Tintoret and Titian, beside which all other landscape grandeur vanishes; and even in the meanest things the rule holds, as in the kaleidoscope, wherein agreeableness is given to forms altogether accidental merely by their repetition and reciprocal opposition; which orderly balance and arrangement are essential to the perfect operation of the more earnest and solemn qualities of the Beautiful, as being heavenly in their nature, and contrary to the violence and disorganization of sin, so that the seeking of them and submission to them is always marked in minds that have been subjected to high moral discipline, and constant in all the great religious painters, to the degree of being an offence and a scorn to men of less tuned and tranquil feeling. Equal ranks of saints are placed on each side of the picture, if there be a kneeling figure on one side, there is a corresponding one on the other, the attendant angels beneath and above are arranged in like order. The Raffaelle at Blenheim, the Madonna di St. Sisto, the St. Cecilia, and all the works of Perugino

§ 3. To what its agreeableness is referable. Various instances;

§ 4. Especially in religious art.

Francia, and John Bellini present some such form, and the balance at least is preserved even in pictures of actions necessitating variety of grouping, as always by Giotto; and by Ghirlandajo in the introduction of his chorus-like side figures, and by Tintoret most eminently in his noblest work, the Crucifixion, where not only the grouping but the arrangement of light is absolutely symmetrical. Where there is no symmetry, the effects of passion and violence are increased, and many very sublime pictures derive their sublimity from the want of it, but they lose proportionally in the diviner quality of beauty. In landscape the same sense of symmetry is preserved, as we shall presently see, even to artificialness, by the greatest men, and it is one of the principal sources of deficient feeling in the landscapes of the present day, that the symmetry of nature is sacrificed to irregular picturesqueness. Of this, however, hereafter.

CHAPTER IX

OF PURITY, OR THE TYPE OF DIVINE ENERGY

§ 1. The influence of Light as a sacred Symbol.

It may at first appear strange that I have not in my enumeration of the Types of Divine attributes, included that which is certainly the most visible and evident of all, as well as the most distinctly expressed in Scripture; God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. But I could not logically class the presence of an actual substance or motion with mere conditions and modes of being, neither could I logically separate from any of these, that which is evidently necessary to the perception of all. And it is also to be observed, that though the love of light is more instinctive in the human heart than any other of the desires connected with beauty, we can hardly separate its agreeableness in its own nature from the sense of its necessity and value for the purposes of life, neither the abstract painfulness of darkness from the sense of danger and incapacity connected with it; and note also that it is not *all* light, but light possessing the universal qualities of beauty, diffused or infinite rather than in points, tranquil, not startling and variable,

pure, not sullied or oppressed, which is indeed pleasant and perfectly typical of the Divine nature.

§ 2. The idea of Purity connected with it.

Observe, however, that there is one quality, the idea of which has been just introduced in connection with light, which might have escaped us in the consideration of mere matter, namely Purity, and yet I think that the original notion of this quality is altogether material, and has only been attributed to colour when such colour is suggestive of the condition of matter from which we originally received the idea. For I see not in the abstract how one colour should be considered purer than another, except as more or less compounded, whereas there is certainly a sense of purity or impurity in the most compound and neutral colours, as well as in the simplest, a quality difficult to define, and which the reader will probably be surprised by my calling the type of Energy, with which it has certainly little traceable connection in the mind.

§ 3. Originally derived from conditions of Matter.

I believe however if we carefully analyze the nature of our ideas of impurity in general, we shall find them refer especially to conditions of matter in which its various elements are placed in a relation incapable of healthy or proper operation; and most distinctly to conditions in which the negation of vital or energetic action is most evident, as in corruption and decay of all kinds, wherein particles which once, by their operation on each other, produced a living and energetic whole, are reduced to a condition of perfect passiveness, in which they are seized upon and appropriated, one by one, piecemeal, by whatever has need of them, without any power of resistance or energy of their own. And thus there is a peculiar painfulness attached to any associations of inorganic with organic matter, such as appear to involve the inactivity and feebleness of the latter, so that things which are not felt to be foul in their own nature, yet become so in association with things of greater inherent energy; as dust or earth, which in a mass excites no painful sensation, excites a most disagreeable one when strewing or staining an animal's skin, because it implies a decline and deadening of the vital and healthy power of the skin. But all reasoning about this impression is rendered difficult, by the host of associated ideas connected with it, for the ocular sense of impurity connected with Corrup-

§ 4. Associated ideas adding to the power of the impression. Influence of clearness.

tion is infinitely enhanced by the offending of other senses and by the grief and horror of it in its own nature, as the special punishment and evidence of Sin, and on the other hand, the ocular delight in purity is mingled, as I before observed, with the love of the mere element of light, as a type of Wisdom and of truth; whence it seems to me that we admire the transparency of bodies, though probably it is still rather owing to our sense of more perfect order and arrangement of particles, and not to our love of light, that we look upon a piece of rock crystal as purer than a piece of marble, and on the marble as purer than a piece of chalk. And let it be observed also that the most lovely objects in nature are only partially transparent. I suppose the utmost possible sense of beauty is conveyed by a feebly translucent, smooth, but not lustrous surface of white, and pale warm red, subdued by the most pure and delicate greys, as in the finer portions of the human frame; in wreaths of snow, and in white plumage under rose light[1], so Viola of Olivia in Twelfth Night, and Homer of Atrides wounded.[2] And I

§ 5. Perfect beauty of Surface, in what consisting.

[1] The reader will observe that I am speaking at present of mere material qualities. If he would obtain perfect ideas respecting loveliness of luminous surface, let him closely observe a swan with its wings expanded in full light five minutes before sunset. The human cheek or the rose leaf is perhaps hardly so pure, and the forms of snow, though individually as beautiful, are less exquisitely combined.

[2] ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τ' ἐλέφαντα γυνὴ φοίνικι μίγνῃ
Μηονίς.

So Spenser of Shamefacedness, an exquisite piece of glowing colour—and sweetly of Belphœbe—(so the roses and lilies of all poets). Compare the making of the image of Florimell.

> The substance whereof she the body made
> Was purest snow, in massy mould congealed,
> Which she had gathered in a shady glade
> Of the Riphoean hills.
> The same she tempered with fine mercury,
> And mingled them with perfect vermily.

With Una he perhaps overdoes the white a little. She is two degrees of comparison above snow. Compare his questioning in the Hymn to Beauty, about that mixture made of colours fair; and goodly temperament of pure complexion.

> "Hath white and red in it such wondrous power
> That it can pierce through the eyes into the heart?"

Where the distinction between typical and vital beauty is very gloriously carried out.

think that transparency and lustre, both beautiful in themselves, are incompatible with the highest beauty because they destroy form, on the full perception of which more of the divinely typical character of the object depends than upon its colour. Hence, in the beauty of snow and of flesh, so much translucency is allowed as is consistent with the full explanation of the forms, while we are suffered to receive more intense impressions of light and transparency from other objects which nevertheless, owing to their necessarily unperceived form, are not perfectly nor affectingly beautiful. A fair forehead outshines its diamond diadem. The sparkle of the cascade withdraws not our eyes from the snowy summits in their evening silence.

§ 6. Purity only metaphorically a type of sinlessness.

It may seem strange to many readers that I have not spoken of purity in that sense in which it is most frequently used, as a type of sinlessness. I do not deny that the frequent metaphorical use of it in Scripture may have and ought to have much influence on the sympathies with which we regard it, and that probably the immediate agreeableness of it to most minds arises far more from this source than from that to which I have chosen to attribute it. But, in the first place, if it be indeed in the signs of Divine and not of human attributes that beauty consists, I see not how the idea of sin can be formed with respect to the Deity, for it is an idea of a relation borne by us to Him, and not in any way to be attached to his abstract nature. And if the idea of sin is incapable of being formed with respect to Him, so also is its negative, for we cannot form an idea of negation, where we cannot form an idea of presence. If for instance one could conceive of taste or flavour in a proposition of Euclid, so also might we of insipidity, but if not of the one, then not of the other. So that, in speaking of the goodness of God, it cannot be that we mean anything more than his Love, Mercifulness, and Justice, and these attributes I have shown to be expressed by other qualities of beauty, and I cannot trace any rational connection between them and the idea of Spotlessness in matter. Neither can I trace any more distinct relation between this idea, and any of the virtues which make up the righteousness of man, except perhaps those of truth and openness, of which I have already spoken as more

expressed by the transparency than the mere purity of matter. So that I conceive the whole use of the terms purity, spotlessness, &c. in moral subjects, to be merely metaphorical, and that it is rather that we illustrate these virtues by the desirableness of material purity, than that we desire material purity because it is illustrative of these virtues.

I repeat, then, that the only idea which I think can be legitimately connected with purity of matter, is this of vital and energetic connection among its particles, and that the idea of foulness is essentially connected with dissolution and death. Thus the purity of the rock, contrasted with the foulness of dust or mould, is expressed by the epithet "living," very singularly given to the rock, in almost all languages; singularly I say, because life is almost the last attribute one would ascribe to stone, but for this visible energy and connection of its particles; and so of water as opposed to stagnancy. And I do not think that, however pure a powder or dust may be, the idea of beauty is ever connected with it, for it is not the mere purity, but the *active* condition of the substance which is desired, so that as soon as it shoots into crystals, or gathers into efflorescence, a sensation of active or real purity is received which was not felt in the calcined caput mortuum.

§ 7. Energy, how expressed by purity of Matter,

And again in colour. I imagine that the quality of it which we term purity is dependent on the full energizing of the rays that compose it, whereof if in compound hues any are overpowered and killed by the rest, so as to be of no value nor operation, foulness is the consequence; while so long as all act together, whether side by side, or from pigments seen one through the other, so that all the colouring matter employed comes into play in the harmony desired, and none be quenched nor killed, purity results. And so in all cases I suppose that pureness is made to us desirable, because expressive of the constant presence and energizing of the Deity in matter, through which all things live and move, and have their being, and that foulness is painful as the accompaniment of disorder and decay, and always indicative of the withdrawal of Divine support. And the practical analogies of life, the invariable connection of outward foulness with mental sloth and degradation, as well as with bodily

§ 8. And of colour.

lethargy and disease, together with the contrary indications of freshness and purity belonging to every healthy and active organic frame (singularly seen in the effort of the young leaves when first their inward energy prevails over the earth, pierces its corruption, and shakes its dust away from their own white purity of life) all these circumstances strengthen the instinct by associations countless and irresistible. And then, finally, with the idea of purity comes that of spirituality, for the essential characteristic of matter is its inertia, whence, by adding to its purity or energy, we may in some measure spiritualize even matter itself. Thus in the descriptions of the Apocalypse it is its purity that fits it for its place in heaven; the river of the water of life, that proceeds out of the throne of the Lamb, is clear as crystal, and the pavement of the city is pure gold, like unto clear glass.[1]

§ 9. Spirituality, how so expressed.

CHAPTER X

OF MODERATION, OR THE TYPE OF GOVERNMENT BY LAW

Of objects which, in respect of the qualities hitherto considered, appear to have equal claims to regard, we find, nevertheless, that certain are preferred to others in consequence of an attractive power, usually expressed by the terms "chasteness, refinement, or elegance," and it appears also that things which in other respects have little in

§ 1. Meaning of the terms Chasteness and Refinement.

[1] I have not spoken here of any of the associations connected with warmth or coolness of colour, they are partly connected with Vital beauty, compare Chap. xiv. § 22, 23, and partly with impressions of the sublime, the discussion of which is foreign to the present subject: purity, however, it is which gives colour to both, for neither warm nor cool colour can be beautiful, if impure.

Neither have I spoken of any questions relating to melodies of colour, a subject of separate science—whose general principle has been already stated in the Seventh Chapter respecting unity of Sequence. Those qualities only are here noted which give absolute beauty, whether to separate colour or to melodies of it—for all melodies are not beautiful, but only those which are expressive of certain pleasant or solemn emotions; and the rest startling, or curious, or cheerful, or exciting, or sublime, but not beautiful, (and so in music). And all questions relating to this grandeur, cheerfulness, or other characteristic impression of colour must be considered under the head of ideas of Relation.

them of natural beauty, and are of forms altogether simple and adapted to simple uses, are capable of much distinction and desirableness in consequence of these qualities only. It is of importance to discover the real nature of the ideas thus expressed.

§ 2. How referable to temporary fashions.

Something of the peculiar meaning of the words is referable to the authority of fashion and the exclusiveness of pride, owing to which that which is the mode of a particular time is submissively esteemed, and that which by its costliness or its rarity is of difficult attainment, or in any way appears to have been chosen as the best of many things, (which is the original sense of the words elegant and exquisite), is esteemed for the witness it bears to the dignity of the chooser.

But neither of these ideas are in any way connected with eternal beauty, neither do they at all account for that agreeableness of colour and form which is especially termed chasteness, and which it would seem to be a characteristic of rightly trained mind in all things to prefer, and of common minds to reject.

§ 3. How to the perception of Completion.

There is however another character of artificial productions, to which these terms have partial reference, which it is of some importance to note, that of finish, exactness, or refinement, which are commonly desired in the works of men, owing both to their difficulty of accomplishment and consequent expression of care and power (compare chapter on Ideas of Power, Part I. Sec. i.), and from their greater resemblance to the working of God, whose "absolute exactness," says Hooker, "all things imitate, by tending to that which is most exquisite in every particular." And there is not a greater sign of the imperfection of general taste, than its capability of contentment with forms and things which, professing completion, are yet not exact nor complete, as in the vulgar with wax and clay and china figures, and in bad sculptors with an unfinished and clay-like modelling of surface, and curves and angles of no precision or delicacy; and in general, in all common and unthinking persons with an imperfect rendering of that which might be pure and fine, as churchwardens are content to lose the sharp lines of stone carving under

clogging obliterations of whitewash, and as the modern Italians scrape away and polish white all the sharpness and glory of the carvings on their old churches, as most miserably and pitifully on St. Mark's at Venice, and the Baptisteries of Pistoja and Pisa, and many others, so also the delight of vulgar painters in coarse and slurred painting, merely for the sake of its coarseness[1], as of Spagnoletto, Salvator, or Murillo, opposed to the divine finish which the greatest and mightiest of men disdained not, but rather wrought out with painfulness and life spending; as Leonardo and Michael Angelo (for the latter, however many things he left unfinished, did finish, if at all, with a refinement that the

§ 4. Finish, by great masters esteemed essential.

[1] It is to be carefully noted that when rude execution is evidently not the result of imperfect feeling and desire (as in these men above named, it is), but of thought; either impatient, which there was necessity to note swiftly, or impetuous which it was well to note in mighty manner, as pre-eminently and in both kinds the case with Tintoret, and often with Michael Angelo, and in lower and more degraded modes with Rubens, and generally in the sketches and first thoughts of great masters; there is received a very noble pleasure, connected both with ideas of power (compare again Part I. Sec. ii. Chap. I.) and with certain actions of the imagination of which we shall speak presently. But this pleasure is not received from the beauty of the work, for nothing can be perfectly beautiful unless complete, but from its simplicity and sufficiency to its immediate purpose, where the purpose is not of beauty at all, as often in things rough hewn, pre-eminently, for instance in the stones of the foundations of the Pitti and Strozzi palaces, whose noble rudeness is to be opposed both to the useless polish, and the barbarous rustications of modern times, (although indeed this instance is not without exception to be received, for the majesty of these rocky buildings depends also in some measure upon the real beauty and finish of the natural curvilinear fractures, opposed to the coarseness of human chiselling) and again, as respects works of higher art, the pleasure of their hasty or imperfect execution is not indicative of their beauty, but of their majesty and fulness of thought and vastness of power. Shade is only beautiful when it magnifies and sets forth the forms of fair things, so negligence is only noble when it is, as Fuseli hath it, "the shadow of energy." Which that it may be, secure the substance and the shade will follow, but let the artist beware of stealing the manner of giant intellects when he has not their intention, and of assuming large modes of treatment when he has little thoughts to treat. There is wide difference between indolent impatience of labour and intellectual impatience of delay, large difference between leaving things unfinished because we have more to do, or because we are satisfied with what we have done. Tintoret, who prayed hard, and hardly obtained, that he might be permitted, the charge of his colours only being borne, to paint a new built house from base to

eye cannot follow, but the feeling only, as in the Pieta of Genoa), and Perugino always, even to the gilding of single hairs among his angel tresses, and the young Raphael, when he was heaven taught, and Angelico, and Pinturicchio, and John Bellini, and all other such serious and loving men. Only it is to be observed that this finish is not a part nor constituent of beauty, but the full and ultimate rendering of it, so that it is an idea only connected with the works of men, for all the works of the Deity are finished with the same, that is, infinite care and completion: and so what degrees of beauty exist among them can in no way be dependent upon this source, inasmuch as there are between them no degrees of care. And therefore, as there certainly is admitted a difference of degree in what we call chasteness, even in Divine work, (compare the hollyhock or the sunflower with the vale lily), we must seek for it some other explanation and source than this.

§ 5. Moderation, its nature and value.

And if, bringing down our ideas of it from complicated objects to simple lines and colours, we analyse and regard them carefully, I think we shall be able to trace them to an under-current of constantly agreeable feeling, excited by the appearance in material things of a self-restrained liberty, that is to say, by the image of that acting of God with regard to all his creation, wherein, though free to operate in whatever arbitrary, sudden, violent, or inconstant ways he will, he yet, if we may reverently so speak, restrains in himself this his omnipotent liberty, and works always in consistent modes, called by us laws. And this restraint or moderation, according to the words of Hooker ("that which doth moderate the force and power, that which doth appoint the form and measure of working, the same we term a Law"), is in the Deity not restraint, such as it is said of creatures, but, as again says Hooker, "the very being of God is a law to his working," so that every appearance of painfulness or want of power and freedom in material things is wrong and ugly; for the right restraint, the image of Divine opera-

battlement, was not one to shun labour, it is the pouring in upon him of glorious thoughts, in inexpressible multitude that his sweeping hand follows so fast. It is as easy to know the slightness of earnest haste from the slightness of blunt feeling, indolence, or affectation, as it is to know the dust of a race, from the dust of dissolution.

tion, is, both in them, and in men, a willing and not painful stopping short of the utmost degree to which their power might reach, and the appearance of fettering or confinement is the cause of ugliness in the one, as the slightest painfulness or effort in restraint is a sign of sin in the other.

I have put this attribute of beauty last, because I consider it the girdle and safeguard of all the rest, and in this respect the most essential of all, for it is possible that a certain degree of beauty may be attained even in the absence of one of its other constituents, as sometimes in some measure without symmetry or without unity. But the least appearance of violence or extravagance, of the want of moderation and restraint, is, I think, destructive of all beauty whatsoever in everything, colour, form, motion, language, or thought, giving rise to that which in colour we call glaring, in form inelegant, in motion ungraceful, in language coarse, in thought undisciplined, in all unchastened; which qualities are in everything most painful, because the signs of disobedient and irregular operation.

§ 6. It is the girdle of Beauty.

And herein we at last find the reason of that which has been so often noted respecting the subtlety and almost invisibility of natural curves and colours, and why it is that we look on those lines as least beautiful which fall into wide and far license of curvature, and as most beautiful which approach nearest (so that the curvilinear character be distinctly asserted) to the government of the right line, as in the pure and severe curves of the draperies of the religious painters; and thus in colour it is not red, but rose colour which is most beautiful, neither such actual green as we find in summer foliage partly, and in our painting of it constantly; but such grey green as that into which nature modifies her distant tints, or such pale green and uncertain as we see in sunset sky, and in the clefts of the glacier and the chrysoprase, and the sea-foam; and so of all colours, not that they may not sometimes be deep and full, but that there is a solemn moderation even in their very fulness, and a holy reference beyond and out of their own nature to great harmonies by which they are governed, and in obedience to which is their glory. Whereof the ignorance is shown in all evil colourists by the violence and positiveness of their hues, and by dulness and discord-

§ 7. How found in natural curves and colours.

ance consequent, for the very brilliancy and real power of all colour is dependent on the chastening of it, as of a voice on its gentleness, and as of action on its calmness, and as all moral vigour on self-command. And therefore as that virtue which men last, and with most difficulty, attain unto, and which many attain not at all, and yet that which is essential to the conduct and almost to the being of all other virtues, since neither imagination, nor invention, nor industry, nor sensibility, nor energy, nor any other good having, is of full avail without this of self-command, whereby works truly masculine and mighty are produced, and by the signs of which they are separated from that lower host of things brilliant, magnificent, and redundant, and farther yet from that of the loose, the lawless, the exaggerated, the insolent, and the profane, I would have the necessity of it foremost among all our inculcating, and the name of it largest among all our inscribing, in so far that, over the doors of every school of Art, I would have this one word, relieved out in deep letters of pure gold,—MODERATION.

§ 8. How difficult of attainment, yet essential to all good.

CHAPTER XI

GENERAL INFERENCES RESPECTING TYPICAL BEAUTY

I HAVE now enumerated and, in some measure explained those characteristics of mere matter by which I conceive it becomes agreeable to the theoretic faculty, under whatever form, dead, organized, or animated, it may present itself. It will be our task in the succeeding volume to examine, and illustrate by examples, the mode in which these characteristics appear in every division of creation, in stones, mountains, waves, clouds, and all organic bodies; beginning with vegetables and then taking instances in the range of animals from the mollusc to man; examining how one animal form is nobler than another, by the more manifest presence of these attributes, and chiefly endeavouring to show how much there is of admirable and lovely, even in what is commonly despised. At present I have

§ 1. The subject incompletely treated, yet admitting of general conclusions.

only to mark the conclusions at which we have as yet arrived respecting the rank of the Theoretic faculty and then to pursue the inquiry farther into the nature of vital beauty.

As I before said, I pretend not to have enumerated all the sources of material beauty, nor the analogies connected with them; it is probable that others may occur to many readers, or to myself as I proceed into more particular inquiry, but I am not careful to collect all conceivable evidence on the subject. I desire only to assert and prove some certain principles and by means of these to show, in some measure, the inherent worthiness and glory of God's works and something of the relations they bear to each other and to us, leaving the subject to be fully pursued, as it only can be, by the ardour and affection of those whom it may interest.

The qualities above enumerated are not to be considered as stamped upon matter for our teaching or enjoyment only, but as the necessary perfection of God's working, and the inevitable stamp of his image on what he creates. For it would be inconsistent with his Infinite perfection to work imperfectly in any place, or in any matter; wherefore we do not find that flowers and fair trees, and kindly skies, are given only where man may see them and be fed by them, but the spirit of God works every where alike, where there is no eye to see, covering all lonely places with an equal glory, using the same pencil and outpouring the same splendour, in the caves of the waters where the sea snakes swim, and in the desert where the satyrs dance, among the fir-trees of the stork, and the rocks of the conies, as among those higher creatures whom he has made capable witnesses of his working. Nevertheless, I think that the admission of different degrees of this glory and image of himself upon creation, has the look of something meant especially for us; for although, in pursuance of the appointed system of Government by universal laws, these same degrees exist where we cannot witness them, yet the existence of degrees at all seems at first unlikely in Divine work, and I cannot see reason for it unless that palpable one of increasing in us the understanding of the sacred characters by showing us the results

§ 2. Typical Beauty not created for man's sake.

§ 3. But degrees of it for his sake admitted.

of their comparative absence. For I know not that if all things had been equally beautiful, we could have received the idea of beauty at all, or if we had, certainly it had become a matter of indifference to us, and of little thought, whereas, through the beneficent ordaining of degrees in its manifestation, the hearts of men are stirred by its occasional occurrence in its noblest form, and all their energies are awakened in the pursuit of it and endeavour to arrest it or recreate it, for themselves. But whatever doubt there may be respecting the exact amount of modification of created things admitted with reference to us, there can be none respecting the dignity of that faculty by which we receive the mysterious evidence of their divine origin. The fact of our deriving constant pleasure from whatever is a type or semblance of divine attributes, and from nothing but that which is so, is the most glorious of all that can be demonstrated of human nature, it not only sets a great gulf of specific separation between us and the lower animals, but it seems a promise of a communion ultimately deep, close, and conscious, with the Being whose darkened manifestations we here feebly and unthinkingly delight in. Probably to every order of intelligence more of his image becomes palpable in all around them, and the glorified spirits and the angels have perceptions as much more full and rapturous than ours, as ours than those of beasts and creeping things. And receiving it, as we must, for an universal axiom that "no natural desire can be entirely frustrate," and seeing that these desires are indeed so unfailing in us that they have escaped not the reasoners of any time, but were held divine of old, and in even heathen countries,[1] it cannot be but that there is in these visionary pleasures, lightly as we now regard them, cause for thankfulness, ground for hope, anchor for faith, more than in all the other manifold gifts and guidances, wherewith God crowns the years, and hedges the paths of Men.

§ 4. What encouragement hence to be received.

[1] Ἡ δὲ τελεία εὐδαιμονία θεωρητική τίς ἐστιν ἐνέργεια. * * τοῖς μὲν γὰρ θεοῖς ἅπας ὁ βίος μακάριος, τοῖς δ' ἀνθρώποις, ἐφ' ὅσον ὁμοίωμά τι τῆς τοιαύτης ἐνεργείας ὑπάρχει. τῶν δ' ἄλλων ζῴων οὐδὲν εὐδαιμονεῖ, ἐπειδὴ οὐδαμῇ κοινωνεῖ θεωρίας.—Arist. Eth. Lib. 10.

The concluding book of the Ethics should be carefully read. It is all most valuable.

CHAPTER XII

OF VITAL BEAUTY.—FIRST, AS RELATIVE

§ 1. Transition from typical to vital Beauty.

I PROCEED more particularly to examine the nature of that second kind of Beauty of which I spoke in the third chapter, as consisting in "the appearance of felicitous fulfilment of function in living things." I have already noticed the example of very pure and high typical beauty which is to be found in the lines and gradations of unsullied snow: If, passing to the edge of a sheet of it, upon the lower Alps, early in May, we find, as we are nearly sure to find, two or three little round openings pierced in it, and through these emergent, a slender, pensive, fragile flower [1], whose small, dark, purple-fringed bell hangs down and shudders over the icy cleft that it has cloven, as if partly wondering at its own recent grave, and partly dying of very fatigue after its hard won victory; we shall be, or we ought to be, moved by a totally different impression of loveliness from that which we receive among the dead ice and the idle clouds. There is now uttered to us a call for sympathy, now offered to us an image of moral purpose and achievement, which, however unconscious or senseless the creature may indeed be that so seems to call, cannot be heard without affection, nor contemplated without worship, by any of us whose heart is rightly tuned, or whose mind is clearly and surely sighted.

Throughout the whole of the organic creation every being in a perfect state exhibits certain appearances or evidences, of happiness, and besides is in its nature, its desires, its modes of nourishment, habitation and death, illustrative or expressive of certain moral dispositions or principles. Now, first, in the keenness of the sympathy which we feel in the happiness, real or apparent, of all organic beings, and which, as we shall presently see, invariably prompts us, from the joy we have in it, to look upon those as most lovely which are most happy; and secondly, in the justness of the moral sense which rightly reads the lesson they are all intended to teach, and classes them in orders of worthiness and beauty

[1] Soldanella Alpina.

according to the rank and nature of that lesson, whether it be of warning or example, of those that wallow or of those that soar, of the fiend hunted swine by the Gennesaret lake, or of the dove returning to its ark of rest; in our right accepting and reading of all this, consists, I say, the ultimately perfect condition of that noble theoretic faculty, whose place in the system of our nature I have already partly vindicated with respect to typical, but which can only fully be established with respect to vital beauty.

§ 2. The perfection of the Theoretic faculty as concerned with Vital Beauty, is Charity.

Its first perfection, therefore, relating to Vital Beauty, is the kindness and unselfish fulness of heart, which receives the utmost amount of pleasure from the happiness of all things. Of which in high degree the heart of man is incapable, neither what intense enjoyment the angels may have in all that they see of things that move and live, and in the part they take in the shedding of God's kindness upon them, can we know or conceive: only in proportion as we draw near to God, and are made in measure like unto him, can we increase this our possession of Charity, of which the entire essence is in God only.

Wherefore it is evident that even the ordinary exercise of this faculty implies a condition of the whole moral being in some measure right and healthy, and that to the entire exercise of it there is necessary the entire perfection of the Christian character, for he who loves not God, nor his brother, cannot love the grass beneath his feet and the creatures that fill those spaces in the universe which he needs not, and which live not for his uses; nay he has seldom grace to be grateful even to those that love him and serve him, while, on the other hand, none can love God, nor his human brother, without loving all things which his Father loves, nor without looking upon them every one as in that respect his brethren also, and perhaps worthier than he, if in the under concords they have to fill, their part is touched more truly. Wherefore it is good to read of that kindness and humbleness of St. Francis of Assisi, who spoke never to bird nor to cicala, nor even to wolf and beast of prey, but as his brother; and so we find are moved the minds of all good and mighty men, as in the lesson that we have from the Mariner of Coleridge, and yet more truly and rightly taught in the Heartleap well, "never

to blend our pleasure, or our pride, with sorrow of the meanest thing that feels;" and again in the White Doe of Rylstone, with the added teaching of that gift, which we have from things beneath us, in thanks for the love they cannot equally return; that anguish of our own "is tempered and allayed by sympathies. Aloft ascending and descending deep. Even to the inferior kinds," so that I know not of anything more destructive of the whole theoretic faculty, not to say of the Christian character and human intellect, than those accursed sports in which man makes of himself, cat, tiger, serpent, chaetodon, and alligator in one, and gathers into one continuance of cruelty for his amusement all the devices that brutes sparingly and at intervals use against each other for their necessities.[1]

§ 3. Only with respect to plants, less affection than sympathy.

As we pass from those beings of whose happiness and pain we are certain to those in which it is doubtful or only seeming, as possibly in plants, (though I would fain hold, if I might, "the faith that every flower, enjoys the air it breathes," neither do I ever crush or gather one without some pain), yet our feeling for them has in it more of sympathy than of actual love, as receiving from them in delight far more than we can give; for love, I think, chiefly grows in giving, at least its essence is the desire of doing good, or giving happiness, and we cannot feel the desire of that which we cannot conceive, so that if we conceive not of a plant as capable of pleasure, we cannot desire to give it pleasure, that is, we cannot love it in the entire sense of the term. Nevertheless, the sympathy of very lofty and sensitive minds usually reaches so far as to the conception of life in the plant, and so to love, as with Shelley, of the sensitive plant, and Shakspeare always, as he has taught us in the sweet voices of Ophelia and Perdita, and Wordsworth always, as of the daffodils, and the celandine.

> "It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold.
> This neither is its courage, nor its choice,
> But its necessity in being old,"

[1] I would have Mr. Landseer, before he gives us any more writhing otters, or yelping packs, reflect whether that which is best worthy of contemplation in a hound be its ferocity, or in an otter its agony, or in a human being its victory, hardly achieved even with the aid of its more sagacious brutal allies, over a poor little fish-catching creature, a foot long.

and so all other great poets (that is to say, great seers)[1] nor do I believe that any mind, however rude, is without some slight perception or acknowledgment of joyfulness in breathless things, as most certainly there are none but feel instinctive delight in the appearances of such enjoyment.

§ 4. Which is proportioned to the appearance of Energy in the Plants.

For it is matter of easy demonstration, that setting the characters of typical beauty aside, the pleasure afforded by every organic form is in proportion to its appearance of healthy vital energy; as in a rose-bush, setting aside all the considerations of gradated flushing of colour and fair folding of line, which it shares with the cloud or the snow-wreath, we find in and through all this, certain signs pleasant and acceptable as signs of life and enjoyment in the particular individual plant itself. Every leaf and stalk is seen to have a function, to be constantly exercising that function, and as it seems, *solely* for the good and enjoyment of the plant. It is true that reflection will show us that the plant is not living for itself alone, that its life is one of benefaction, that it gives as well as receives, but no sense of this whatsoever mingles with our perception of physical beauty in its forms. Those forms appear to be necessary to its health, the symmetry of its leaflets, the smoothness of its stalks, the vivid green of its shoots, are looked upon by us as signs of the plant's own happiness and perfection; they are useless to us, except as they give us pleasure in our sympathizing with that of the plant, and if we see a leaf withered or shrunk or worm eaten, we say it is ugly, and feel it to be most painful, not because it hurts *us*, but because it seems to hurt the plant, and conveys to us an idea of pain and disease and failure of life in *it*.

That the amount of pleasure we receive is in exact proportion to the appearance of vigour and sensibility in the plant, is easily proved by observing the effect of those which show the evidences of it in the least degree, as, for instance, any of the cacti not in flower. Their masses are heavy and simple, their growth slow, their various parts, if they are ramified, jointed on one to another, as if they were buckled or pinned together instead of growing out of each other

[1] Compare Milton.

"They at her coming sprung
And touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew."

(note the singular imposition in many of them, the prickly pear for instance, of the fruit upon the body of the plant, so that it looks like a swelling or disease) and often farther opposed by harsh truncation of line as in the cactus truncato-phylla. All these circumstances so concur to deprive the plant of vital evidences, that we receive from it more sense of pain than of beauty; and yet even here, the sharpness or the angles, the symmetrical order and strength of the spines, the fresh and even colour of the body, are looked for earnestly as signs of healthy condition, our pain is increased by their absence, and indefinitely increased if blotches, and other appearances of bruise and decay, interfere with that little life which the plant seems to possess.

The same singular characters belong in animals to the crustacea, as to the lobster, crab, scorpion, &c. and in great measure deprive them of the beauty which we find in higher orders, so that we are reduced to look for their beauty to single parts and joints, and not to the whole animal.

§ 5. This sympathy is unselfish, and does not regard utility.

Now I wish particularly to impress upon the reader that all these sensations of beauty in the plant arise from our unselfish sympathy with its happiness, and not from any view of the qualities in it which may bring good to us, nor even from our acknowledgment is it of any moral condition beyond that of mere felicity; for such an acknowledgment belongs to the second operation of the theoretic faculty (compare § 2), and not to the sympathetic part which we are at present examining; so that we even find that in this respect, the moment we begin to look upon any creature as subordinate to some purpose out of itself, some of the sense of organic beauty is lost. Thus, when we are told that the leaves of a plant are occupied in decomposing carbonic acid, and preparing oxygen for us, we begin to look upon it with some such indifference as upon a gasometer. It has become a machine; some of our sense of its happiness is gone; its emanation of inherent life is no longer pure. The bending trunk, waving to and fro in the wind above the waterfall is beautiful because it is happy, though it is perfectly useless to us. The same trunk, hewn down and thrown across the stream, has lost its beauty. It serves as a bridge,—it has become useful; it lives not for itself,

and its beauty is gone, or what it retains is purely typical, dependent on its lines and colours, not on its functions. Saw it into planks, and, though now adapted to become permanently useful, its whole beauty is lost for ever, or to be regained only in part when decay and ruin shall have withdrawn it again from use, and left it to receive from the hand of nature the velvet moss and varied lichen, which may again suggest ideas of inherent happiness, and tint its mouldering sides with hues of life.

There is something, I think, peculiarly beautiful and instructive in this unselfishness of the Theoretic faculty, and in its abhorrence of all utility which is based on the pain or destruction of any creature, for in such ministering to each other as is consistent with the essence and energy of both, it takes delight, as in the clothing of the rock by the herbage, and the feeding of the herbage by the stream.

§ 6. Especially with respect to animals.

But still more distinct evidence of its being indeed the expression of happiness to which we look for our first pleasure in organic form, is to be found in the way in which we regard the bodily frame of animals: of which it is to be noted first, that there is not anything which causes so intense and tormenting a sense of ugliness as any scar, wound, monstrosity, or imperfection which seems inconsistent with the animal's ease and health; and that although in vegetables, where there is no immediate sense of pain, we are comparatively little hurt by excrescences and irregularities, but are sometimes even delighted with them, and fond of them, as children of the oak-apple, and sometimes look upon them as more interesting than the uninjured conditions, as in the gnarled and knotted trunks of trees; yet the slightest approach to any thing of the kind in animal form is regarded with intense horror, merely from the sense of pain it conveys. And, in the second place, it is to be noted that whenever we dissect the animal frame, or conceive it as dissected, and substitute in our ideas the neatness of mechanical contrivance for the pleasure of the animal; the moment we reduce enjoyment to ingenuity, and volition to leverage, that instant all sense of beauty disappears. Take, for instance, the action of the limb of the ostrich, which is beautiful so long as we see it in its swift uplifting along the Desert sands, and trace in

§ 7. And it is destroyed by evidences of mechanism.

the tread of it her scorn of the horse and his rider, but would infinitely lose of its impressiveness, if we could see the spring ligament playing backwards and forwards in alternate jerks over the tubercle at the hock joint. Take again the action of the dorsal fin of the shark tribe. So long as we observe the uniform energy of motion in the whole frame, the lash of the tail, bound of body, and instantaneous lowering of the dorsal, to avoid the resistance of the water, as it turns, there is high sense of organic power and beauty. But when we dissect the dorsal, and find that its superior ray is supported in its position by a peg in a notch at its base, and that when the fin is to be lowered, the peg has to be taken out, and, when it is raised, put in again; although we are filled with wonder at the ingenuity of the mechanical contrivance, all our sense of beauty is gone, and not to be recovered until we again see the fin playing on the animal's body, apparently by its own will alone, with the life running along its rays. It is by a beautiful ordinance of the Creator that all these mechanisms are concealed from sight, though open to investigation, and that in all which is outwardly manifested we seem to see his presence rather than his workmanship, and the mysterious breath of life, rather than the manipulation of matter.

As it, therefore, appears from all evidence that it is the sense of felicity which we first desire in organic form, it is evident from reason, as demonstrable by experience, that those forms will be the most beautiful (always, observe, leaving typical beauty out of the question) which exhibit most of power, and seem capable of most quick and joyous sensation. Hence we find gradations of beauty, from the apparent impenetrableness of hide and slow motion of the elephant and the rhinoceros, from the foul occupation of the vulture, from the earthy struggling of the worm, to the brilliancy of the butterfly, the buoyancy of the bird, the swiftness of the fawn and the horse, the fair and kingly sensibility of man.

Thus far then, the theoretic faculty is concerned with the happiness of animals, and its exercise depends on the cultivation of the affections only. Let us next observe how it is concerned with the moral functions of animals, and therefore how it is dependent on the cultivation of every moral sense. There is not any organic creature, but in its

history and habits it shall exemplify or illustrate to us some moral excellence or deficiency, or some point of God's providential government, which it is necessary for us to know. Thus the functions and the fates of animals are distributed to them, with a variety which exhibits to us the dignity and results of almost every passion and kind of conduct, some filthy and slothful, pining and unhappy; some rapacious, restless, and cruel; some ever earnest and laborious, and, I think, unhappy in their endless labour, creatures, like the bee, that heap up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them, and others employed, like angels in endless offices of love and praise. Of which when, in right condition of mind, we esteem those most beautiful, whose functions are the most noble, whether as some, in mere energy, or as others, in moral honour, so that we look with hate on the foulness of the sloth, and the subtlety of the adder, and the rage of the hyæna: with the honour due to their earthly wisdom we invest the earnest ant and unwearied bee; but we look with full perception of sacred function to the tribes of burning plumage and choral voice.[1] And so what lesson we might receive for our earthly conduct from the creeping and laborious things, was taught us by that earthly king who made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones (yet thereafter was less rich toward God). But from the lips of an heavenly King, who had not where to lay his head, we were taught what lesson we have to learn from those higher creatures who sow not, nor reap, nor gather into barns, for their Heavenly Father feedeth them.

§ 8. The second perfection of the Theoretic faculty as concerned with life is justice of moral judgment.

There is much difficulty in the way of our looking with this rightly balanced judgment on the moral functions of the animal tribes, owing to the independent and often opposing characters of typical beauty, which are among them, as it seems, arbitrarily distributed, so that the most fierce and cruel are often clothed in the liveliest colours, and strengthened by the noblest forms, with this only exception, that so far as I know, there is no high beauty in any slothful animal, but even among those of prey, its characters exist in exalted measure upon

§ 9. How impeded.

[1] "Type of the wise—who soar, but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home."
(WORDSWORTH.—To the Skylark.)

those that range and pursue, and are in equal degree withdrawn from those that lie subtly and silently in the covert of the reed and fens. But that mind only is fully disciplined in its Theoretic power, which can, when it chooses, throwing off the sympathies and repugnancies with which the ideas of destructiveness or innocence accustom us to regard the animal tribes, as well as those meaner likes and dislikes which arise, I think, from the greater or less resemblance of animal powers to our own, can pursue the pleasures of typical beauty down to the scales of the alligator, the coils of the serpent, and the joints of the beetle; and again, on the other hand, regardless of the impressions of typical beauty, accept from each creature, great or small, the more important lessons taught by its position in creation as sufferer or chastiser, as lowly or having dominion, as of foul habit or lofty aspiration, and from the several perfections which all illustrate or possess, courage, perseverance, industry, or intelligence, or, higher yet, of love and patience, and fidelity, and rejoicing, and never wearied praise. Which moral perfections that they indeed are productive, in proportion to their expression, of instant beauty instinctively felt, is best proved by comparing those parts of animals in which they are definitely expressed, as for instance the eye, of which we shall find those ugliest which have in them no expression nor life whatever, but a corpselike stare, or an indefinite meaningless glaring, as, in some lights, those of owls and cats, and mostly of insects and of all creatures in which the eye seems rather an external, optical instrument than a bodily member through which emotion and virtue of soul may be expressed, (as pre-eminently in the chamæleon) because the seeming want of sensibility and vitality in a living creature is the most painful of all wants. And next to these in ugliness come the eyes that gain vitality indeed, but only by means of the expression of intense malignity, as in the serpent and alligator; and next to these, to whose malignity is added the virtue of subtlety and keenness, as of the lynx and hawk; and then, by diminishing the malignity and increasing the expressions of comprehensiveness and determination, we arrive at those of the lion and eagle and at last, by destroying malignity altogether, at the fair eye of the herbivorous tribes, wherein the superiority of beauty

§ 10. The influence of moral expression.

consists always in the greater or less sweetness and gentleness primarily, as in the gazelle, camel, and ox, and in the greater or less intellect, secondarily, as in the horse and dog, and finally, in gentleness and intellect both in man. And again, taking the mouth, another source of expression, we find it ugliest where it has none, as mostly in fish, or perhaps where without gaining much in expression of any kind, it becomes a formidable destructive instrument, as again in the alligator, and then, by some increase of expression, we arrive at birds' beaks, wherein there is much obtained by the different ways of setting on the mandibles than is commonly supposed (compare the bills of the duck and the eagle) and thence we reach the finely developed lips of the carnivora which nevertheless lose that beauty they have, in the actions of snarling and biting, and from these we pass to the nobler because gentler and more sensible, of the horse, camel, and fawn, and so again up to man, only there is less traceableness of the principle in the mouths of the lower animals, because they are only in slight measure capable of expression, and chiefly used as instruments, and that of low function, whereas in man the mouth is given most definitely as a means of expression, beyond and above its lower functions. Compare the remarks of Sir Charles Bell on this subject in his Essay on Expression, and compare the mouth of the negro head, given by him (p. 28. third edition) with that of Raphael's St. Catherine. I shall illustrate the subject farther hereafter by giving the mouth of one of the demons of Orcagna's inferno, with projecting incisors, and that of a fish and a swine, in opposition to pure graminivorous and human forms; but at present it is sufficient for my purpose to insist on the single great principle, that, wherever expression is possible, and uninterfered with by characters of typical beauty, which confuse the subject exceedingly as regards the mouth, for the typical beauty of the carnivorous lips is on a grand scale, while it exists in very low degree in the beaks of birds, wherever I say these considerations do not interfere, the beauty of the animal form is in exact proportion to the amount of moral or intellectual virtue expressed by it, and wherever beauty exists at all, there is some kind of virtue to which it is owing as the majesty of the lion's eye is owing not to its

ferocity, but to its seriousness and seeming intellect, and of the lion's mouth to its strength and sensibility, and not its gnashing of teeth, nor wrinkling in its wrath; and farther be it noted, that of the intellectual or moral virtues, the moral are those which are attended with most beauty, so that the gentle eye of the gazelle is fairer to look upon than the more keen glance of men, if it be unkind.

§ 11. As also in Plants.

Of the parallel effects of expression upon plants there is little to be noted, as the mere naming of the subject cannot but bring countless illustrations to the mind of every reader: only this, that, as we saw they were less susceptible of our sympathetic love, owing to the absence in them of capability of enjoyment, so they are less open to the affections based upon the expression of moral virtue, owing to their want of volition; so that even on those of them which are deadly and unkind we look not without pleasure, the more because this their evil operation cannot be by them outwardly expressed, but only by us empirically known; so that of the outward seemings and expressions of plants, there are few but are in some way good and therefore beautiful, as of humility, and modesty, and love of places and things, in the reaching out of their arms, and clasping of their tendrils; and energy of resistance, and patience of suffering, and beneficence one toward another in shade and protection; and to us also in scents and fruits (for of their healing virtues, however important to us, there is no more outward sense nor seeming than of their properties mortal or dangerous).

§ 12. Recapitulation.

Whence, in fine, looking to the whole kingdom of organic nature, we find that our full receiving of its beauty depends first on the sensibility and then on the accuracy and touchstone faithfulness of the heart in its moral judgments, so that it is necessary that we should not only love all creatures well, but esteem them in that order which is according to God's laws and not according to our own human passions and predilections, not looking for swiftness, and strength, and cunning, rather than for patience and kindness, still less delighting in their animosity and cruelty one toward another, neither, if it may be avoided, interfering with the working of Nature in any way, nor, when we interfere to obtain service, judging from the morbid conditions of the animal or vegetable so induced, for we

see every day the Theoretic faculty entirely destroyed in those who are interested in particular animals, by their delight in the results of their own teaching, and by the vain straining of curiosity for new forms such as nature never intended, as the disgusting types for instance, which we see earnestly sought for by the fanciers of rabbits and pigeons, and constantly in horses, substituting for the true and balanced beauty of the free creature some morbid development of a single power, as of swiftness in the racer, at the expense, in certain measure, of the animal's healthy constitution and fineness of form; and so the delight of horticulturists in the spoiling of plants; so that in all cases we are to beware of such opinions as seem in any way referable to human pride, or even to the grateful or pernicious influence of things upon ourselves, and to cast the mind free, and out of ourselves, humbly, and yet always in that noble position of pause above the other visible Creatures, nearer God than they, which we authoritatively hold, thence looking down upon them, and testing the clearness of our moral vision by the extent, and fulness, and constancy of our pleasure in the light of God's love as it embraces them, and the harmony of his holy laws, that for ever bring mercy out of rapine, and religion out of wrath.

CHAPTER XIII

OF VITAL BEAUTY.—SECONDLY AS GENERIC

§ 1. The beauty of fulfilment of appointed function in every animal.

HITHERTO we have observed the conclusions of the Theoretic faculty with respect to the relations of happiness, and of more or less exalted function existing between different orders of organic being. But we must pursue the inquiry farther yet, and observe what impressions of beauty are connected with more or less perfect fulfilment of the appointed function by different individuals of the same species. We are now no longer called to pronounce upon worthiness of occupation or dignity of disposition; but both employment and capacity being known, and the animal's position and duty fixed, we have to regard it in that respect alone, comparing it with other individuals of

its species, and to determine how far it worthily executes its office; whether if scorpion it have poison enough, or if tiger, strength enough, or if dove, innocence enough, to sustain rightly its place in creation, and come up to the perfect idea of dove, tiger, or scorpion.

In the first or sympathetic operation of the theoretic faculty, it will be remembered, we receive pleasure from the signs of mere happiness in living things. In the second theoretic operation of comparing and judging, we constituted ourselves such judges of the lower creatures as Adam was made by God when they were brought to him to be named, and we allowed of beauty in them as they reached, more or less, to that standard of moral perfection by which we test ourselves. But in the third place we are to come down again from the judgment seat, and taking it for granted that every creature of God is in some way good, and has a duty and specific operation providentially accessary to the wellbeing of all, we are to look in this faith to that employment and nature of each, and to derive pleasure from their entire perfection and fitness for the duty they have to do, and in their entire fulfilment of it, and so we are to take pleasure and find beauty in the magnificent binding together of the jaws of the ichthyosaurus for catching and holding, and in the adaptation of the lion for springing, and of the locust for destroying, and of the lark for singing, and in every creature for the doing of that which God has made it to do. Which faithful pleasure in the perception of the perfect operation of lower creatures I have placed last among the perceptions of the theoretic faculty concerning them, because it is commonly last acquired, both owing to the humbleness and trustfulness of heart which it demands, and because it implies a knowledge of the habits and structure of every creature, such as we can but imperfectly possess.

§ 2. The two senses of the word Ideal. Either it refers to action of the imagination,

The perfect *idea* of the form and condition in which all the properties of the species are fully developed, is called the ideal of the species. The question of the nature of ideal conception of species, and of the mode in which the mind arrives at it, has been the subject of so much discussion, and source of so much embarrassment, chiefly owing to that unfortunate distinction between Idealism

and Realism which leads most people to imagine the Ideal opposed to the Real, and therefore *false*, that I think it necessary to request the reader's most careful attention to the following positions.

Any work of art which represents, not a material object, but the mental conception of a material object, is, in the primary sense of the word, ideal. That is to say, it represents an idea and not a thing. Any work of art which represents or realizes a material object, is in the primary sense of the term, unideal.

Ideal works of art, therefore, in the first sense, represent the result of an act of imagination, and are good or bad in proportion to the healthy condition and general power of the imagination whose acts they represent.

Unideal works of art (the studious production of which is termed Realism) represent actual existing things, and are good or bad in proportion to the perfection of the representation.

All entirely bad works of art may be divided into those which, professing to be imaginative, bear no stamp of imagination, and are therefore false, and those which, professing to be representative of matter, miss of the representation, and are therefore nugatory.

It is the habit of most observers to regard art as representative of matter, and to look only for the entireness of representation; and it was to this view of art that I limited the arguments of the former sections of the present work, wherein having to oppose the conclusions of a criticism entirely based upon the realist system, I was compelled to meet that criticism on its own grounds. But the greater part of works of art, more especially those devoted to the expression of ideas of beauty, are the results of the agency of imagination, their worthiness depending, as above stated, on the healthy condition of the imagination.

Hence it is necessary for us, in order to arrive at conclusions respecting the worthiness of such works, to define and examine the nature of the imaginative faculty, and to determine first what are the signs or conditions of its existence at all; and secondly, what are the evidences of its healthy and efficient existence, upon which examination I shall enter in the second section of the present part.

But there is another sense of the word Ideal besides this,

and it is that with which we are here concerned. It is evident that, so long as we use the word to signify that art which represents ideas and not things, we may use it as truly of the art which represents an idea of Caliban, and not real Caliban, as of the art which represents an idea of Antinous, and not real Antinous. For that is as much imagination which conceives the monster as which conceives the man. If, however, Caliban and Antinous be creatures of the same species, and the form of the one contain not the fully developed types or characters of the species, while the form of the other presents the greater part of them, then the latter is said to be a form more ideal than the other, as a nearer approximation to the general idea or conception of the species.

§ 3. Or to perfection of type.

Now it is evident that this use of the word ideal is much less accurate than the other from which it is derived, for it rests on the assumption that the assemblage of all the characters of a species in their perfect development cannot exist but in the imagination. For if it can actually and in reality exist, it is not right to call it ideal or imaginary, it would be better to call it characteristic or general, and to reserve the word ideal for the results of the operation of the imagination, either on the perfect or imperfect forms.

§ 4. This last sense how inaccurate, yet to be retained.

Nevertheless, the word ideal has been so long and universally accepted in this sense, that I think it better to continue the use of it, so only that the reader will be careful to observe the distinction in the sense, according to the subject matter under discussion. At present then, using it as expressive of the noble generic form which indicates the full perfection of the creature in all its functions, I wish to examine how far this perception exists or may exist in nature, and, if not in nature, how it is by us discoverable or imaginable.

Now it is better, when we wish to arrive at truth, always to take familiar instances, wherein the mind is not likely to be biassed by any elevated associations or favourite theories. Let us ask therefore, first, what kind of ideal form may be attributed to a limpet or an oyster, that is to say, whether all oysters do or do not come up to the entire notion or idea of an oyster. I apprehend that although in respect of size, age, and kind

§ 5. Of Ideal form. First, in the lower animals.

of feeding, there may be some differences between them, yet of those which are of full size and healthy condition there will be found many which fulfil the conditions of an oyster in every respect, and that so perfectly, that we could not, by combining the features of two or more together, produce a more perfect oyster than any that we see. I suppose also, that, out of a number of healthy fish, birds, or beasts, of the same species, it would not be easy to select an individual as superior to *all* the rest; neither by comparing two or more of the nobler examples together, to arrive at the conception of a form superior to that of either; but that, though the accidents of more abundant food or more fitting habitation may induce among them some varieties of size, strength, and colour, yet the entire generic form would be presented by many, neither would any art be able to add to or diminish from it.

§ 6. In what consistent.

It is, therefore, hardly right to use the word ideal of the generic forms of these creatures, of which we see actual examples; but if we are to use it, then be it distinctly understood that their ideality consists in the full development of all the powers and properties of the creature as such, and is inconsistent with accidental or imperfect developments, and even with great variation from average size, the ideal size being neither gigantic nor diminutive, but the utmost grandeur and entireness of proportion at a certain point above the mean size; for as more individuals always fall short of generic size than rise above it, the generic is above the average or mean size. And this perfection of the creature invariably involves the utmost possible degree of all those properties of beauty, both typical and vital, which it is appointed to possess.

§ 7. Ideal form in vegetables.

Let us next observe the conditions of ideality in vegetables. Out of a large number of primroses or violets, I apprehend that, although one or two might be larger than all the rest, the greater part would be very sufficient primroses and violets. And that we could, by no study nor combination of violets, conceive of a better violet than many in the bed. And so generally of the blossoms and separate members of all vegetables.

But among the entire forms of the complex vegetables, as of oak-trees, for instance, there exists very large and constant difference, some being what we hold to be fine oaks,

as in parks, and places where they are taken care of, and have their own way, and some are but poor and mean oaks, which have had no one to take care of them, but have been obliged to maintain themselves.

That which we have to determine is, whether ideality be predicable of the fine oaks only, or whether the poor and mean oaks also may be considered as ideal, that is, coming up to the conditions of oak, and the general notion of oak.

§ 8. The difference of position between plants and animals.

Now there is this difference between the positions held in creation by animals and plants, and thence in the dispositions with which we regard them; that the animals, being for the most part locomotive, are capable both of living where they choose, and of obtaining what food they want, and of fulfilling all the conditions necessary to their health and perfection. For which reason they are answerable for such health and perfection, and we should be displeased and hurt if we did not find it in one individual as well as another.

But the case is evidently different with plants. They are intended fixedly to occupy many places comparatively unfit for them, and to fill up all the spaces where greenness, and coolness, and ornament, and oxygen are wanted, and that with very little reference to their comfort or convenience. Now it would be hard upon the plant, if, after being tied to a particular spot, where it is indeed much wanted, and is a great blessing, but where it has enough to do to live, whence it cannot move to obtain what it needs or likes, but must stretch its unfortunate arms here and there for bare breath and light, and split its way among rocks, and grope for sustenance in unkindly soil; it would be hard upon the plant, I say, if under all these disadvantages, it were made answerable for its appearance, and found fault with because it was not a fine plant of the kind. And so we find it ordained that in order that no unkind comparisons may be drawn between one and another, there are not appointed to plants the fixed number, position, and proportion of members which are ordained in animals (and any variation from which in these is unpardonable), but a continually varying number and position, even among the more freely growing examples, admitting therefore all kinds of license to those which have

§ 9. Admits of variety in the Ideal of the former.

enemies to contend with, and that without in any way detracting from their dignity and perfection.

So then there is in trees no perfect form which can be fixed upon or reasoned out as ideal, but that is always an ideal oak which, however poverty-stricken, or hunger-pinched, or tempest-tortured, is yet seen to have done, under its appointed circumstances, all that could be expected of oak.

The ideal, therefore, of the park oak is that to which I alluded in the conclusion of the former part of this work, full size, united terminal curve, equal and symmetrical range of branches on each side. The ideal of the mountain oak may be anything, twisting, and leaning, and shattered, and rock-encumbered, so only that amidst all its misfortunes, it maintain the dignity of oak; and, indeed, I look upon this kind of tree as more ideal than the other, in so far as by its efforts and struggles, more of its nature, enduring power, patience in waiting for, and ingenuity in obtaining what it wants, is brought out, and so more of the essence of oak exhibited, than under more fortunate conditions.

§ 10. Ideal form in vegetables destroyed by Cultivation.

And herein, then, we at last find the cause of that fact which we have twice already noted, that the exalted or seemingly improved condition, whether of plant or animal, induced by human interference, is not the true and artistical idea of it.[1] It has been well shown by Dr. Herbert,[2] that many plants are found alone on a certain soil or subsoil in a wild state, not because such soil is favourable to them, but because they alone are capable of existing on it, and because all dangerous rivals are by its inhospitality removed. Now if we withdraw the plant from this position, which it hardly endures, and supply it with the earth, and maintain about it the temperature that it delights in; withdrawing from it at the same time all rivals which, in such conditions nature would have thrust upon it, we shall indeed

[1] I speak not here of those conditions of vegetation which have especial reference to man, as of seeds and fruits, whose sweetness and farina seem in great measure given, not for the plant's sake, but for his, and to which therefore the interruption in the harmony of creation of which he was the cause is extended; and their sweetness and larger measure of good to be obtained only by his redeeming labour. His curse has fallen on the corn and the vine; and the wild barley misses of its fulness, that he may eat bread by the sweat of his brow.

[2] Journal of the Horticultural Society. Part I.

obtain a magnificently developed example of the plant, colossal in size, and splendid in organization, but we shall utterly lose in it that moral ideal which is dependent on its right fulfilment of its appointed functions. It was intended and created by the Deity for the covering of those lonely spots where no other plant could live; it has been thereto endowed with courage, and strength, and capacities of endurance; its character and glory are not therefore in the gluttonous and idle feeling of its own over luxuriance, at the expense of other creatures utterly destroyed and rooted out for its good alone, but in its right doing of its hard duty, and forward climbing into those spots of forlorn hope where it alone can bear witness to the kindness and presence of the Spirit that cutteth out rivers among the rocks, as it covers the valleys with corn: and there, in its vanward place, and only there, where nothing is withdrawn for it, nor hurt by it, and where nothing can take part of its honour, nor usurp its throne, are its strength, and fairness, and price, and goodness in the sight of God to be truly esteemed.

§ 11. Instance in the Soldanella and Ranunculus.

The first time that I saw the Soldanella Alpina, before spoken of, it was growing, of magnificent size, on a sunny Alpine pasture, among bleating of sheep and lowing of cattle, associated with a profusion of Geum montanum, and Ranunculus Pyrenæus. I noticed it only because new to me, nor perceived any peculiar beauty in its cloven flower. Some days after, I found it alone, among the rack of the higher clouds, and howling of glacier winds, and, as I described it, piercing through an edge of avalanche, which in its retiring had left the new ground brown and lifeless, and as if burned by recent fire; the plant was poor and feeble, and seemingly exhausted with its efforts, but it was then that I comprehended its ideal character, and saw its noble function and order of glory among the constellations of the earth.

The Ranunculus glacialis might perhaps by cultivation be blanched from its wan and corpse-like paleness to purer white, and won to more branched and lofty development of its ragged leaves. But the Ideal of the plant is to be found only in the last, loose stones of the moraine, alone there; wet with the cold, unkindly drip of the glacier water, and trembling as the loose and steep dust to which it clings

yields ever and anon, and shudders and crumbles away from about its root.

§ 12. The beauty of repose and felicity, how consistent with such Ideal.

And if it be asked how this conception of the utmost beauty of ideal form is consistent with what we formerly argued respecting the pleasantness of the appearance of felicity in the creature, let it be observed, and for ever held, that the right and true happiness of every creature, is in this very discharge of its function, and in those efforts by which its strength and inherent energy are developed: and that the repose of which we also spoke as necessary to all beauty, is, as was then stated, repose not of inanition, nor of luxury, nor of irresolution, but the repose of magnificent energy and being; in action, the calmness of trust and determination; in rest, the consciousness of duty accomplished and of victory won, and this repose and this felicity can take place as well in the midst of trial and tempest, as beside the waters of comfort, they perish only when the creature is either unfaithful to itself, or is afflicted by circumstances unnatural and malignant to its being, and for the contending with which it was neither fitted nor ordained. Hence that rest which is indeed glorious is of the chamois couched breathless on his granite bed, not of the stalled ox over his fodder, and that happiness which is indeed beautiful is in the bearing of those trial tests which are appointed for the proving of every creature, whether it be good, or whether it be evil; and in the fulfilment to the uttermost of every command it has received, and the out-carrying to the uttermost of every power and gift it has gotten from its God.

§ 13. The ideality of Art.

Therefore the task of the painter in his pursuit of ideal form is to attain accurate knowledge, so far as may be in his power, of the character, habits, and peculiar virtues, duties of every species of being; down even to the stone, for there is an ideality of stones according to their kind, an ideality of granite and slate and marble, and it is in the utmost and most exalted exhibition of such individual character, order, and use, that all ideality of art consists. The more cautious he is in assigning the right species of moss to its favourite trunk, and the right kind of weed to its necessary stone, in marking the definite and characteristic leaf, blossom, seed, fracture, colour, and inward anatomy of everything, the more truly ideal his work

becomes. All confusion of species, all careless rendering of character, all unnatural and arbitrary association, is vulgar and unideal in proportion to its degree.

It is to be noted, however, that nature sometimes in a measure herself conceals these generic differences, and that when she displays them it is commonly on a scale too small for human hand to follow.

§ 14. How connected with the Imaginative faculties.

The pursuit and seizure of the generic differences in their concealment, and the display of them on a larger and more palpable scale, is one of the wholesome and healthy operations of the imagination of which we are presently to speak.[1]

Generic differences being commonly exhibited by art in different manner and way from that of their natural occurrence, are in this respect more strictly and truly ideal in art than in reality.

This only remains to be noted, that, of all creatures whose existence involves birth, progress, and dissolution, ideality is predicable all through their existence, so that they be perfect with reference to their supposed period of being. Thus there is an ideal of infancy, of youth, of old age, of death, and of decay. But when the ideal form of the species is spoken of or conceived in general terms, the form is understood to be of that period when the generic attributes are perfectly developed, and previous to the commencement of their decline. At which period all the characters of vital and typical beauty are commonly most concentrated in them, though the arrangement and proportion of these characters varies at different periods, youth having more of the vigorous beauty, and age of the reposing; youth of typical outward fairness, and age of expanded and aetherialized moral expression; the babe, again, in some measure atoning in gracefulness for its want of strength, so that the balanced glory of the creature continues in solemn interchange, perhaps even

§ 15. Ideality, how belonging to ages and conditions.

> "Filling more and more with crystal light,
> As pensive evening deepens into night."

Hitherto, however, we have confined ourselves to the examination of ideal form in the lower animals, and we have found that, to arrive at it, no combination of forms nor exertion of fancy is required, but only simple choice

[1] Compare Sec. II. Chap. IV.

among those naturally presented, together with careful investigation and anatomizing of the habits of the creatures. I fear we shall arrive at a very different conclusion, in considering the ideal form of man.

CHAPTER XIV

OF VITAL BEAUTY.—THIRDLY, IN MAN

HAVING thus passed gradually through all the orders and fields of creation, and traversed that goodly line of God's happy creatures who "leap not, but express a feast, where all the guests sit close, and nothing wants," without finding any deficiency which human invention might supply, nor any harm which human interference might mend, we come at last to set ourselves face to face with ourselves, expecting that in creatures made after the image of God we are to find comeliness and completion more exquisite than in the fowls of the air and the things that pass through the paths of the sea.

§ 1. Condition of the human creature entirely different from that of the lower animals.

But behold now a sudden change from all former experience. No longer among the individuals of the race is there equality or likeness, a distributed fairness and fixed type visible in each, but evil diversity, and terrible stamp of various degradation; features seamed by sickness, dimmed by sensuality, convulsed by passion, pinched by poverty, shadowed by sorrow, branded with remorse; bodies consumed with sloth, broken down by labour, tortured by disease, dishonoured in foul uses; intellects without power, hearts without hope, minds earthly and devilish; our bones full of the sin of our youth, the heaven revealing our iniquity, the earth rising up against us, the roots dried up beneath, and the branch cut off above; well for us only, if, after beholding this our natural face in a glass, we desire not straightway to forget what manner of men we be.

Herein there is at last something, and too much, for that short stopping intelligence and dull perception of ours to accomplish, whether in earnest fact, or in the seeking for the outward image of beauty:—to undo the devil's work, to restore to the body

§ 2. What room here for idealization.

the grace and the power which inherited disease has destroyed, to return to the spirit the purity, and to the intellect the grasp that they had in Paradise. Now, first of all, this work, be it observed is in no respect a work of imagination. Wrecked we are, and nearly all to pieces; but that little good by which we are to redeem ourselves is to be got out of the old wreck, beaten about and full of sand though it be; and not out of that desert island of pride on which the devils split first, and we after them: and so the only restoration of the body that we can reach is not to be coined out of our fancies, but to be collected out of such uninjured and bright vestiges of the old seal as we can find and set together, and so the ideal of features as the good and perfect soul is seen in them, is not to be reached by imagination, but by the seeing and reaching forth of the better part of the soul to that of which it must first know the sweetness and goodness in itself, before it can much desire, or rightly find, the signs of it in others.

I say much desire and rightly find, because there is not any soul so sunk but that it shall in some measure feel the impression of mental beauty in the human features, and detest in others its own likeness, and in itself despise that which of itself it has made.

§ 3. How the conception of the bodily ideal is reached.

Now, of the ordinary process by which the realization of ideal bodily form is reached, there is explanation enough in all treatises on art, and it is so far well comprehended that I need not stay long to consider it. So far as the sight and knowledge of the human form, of the purest race, exercised from infancy constantly, but not excessively in all exercises of dignity, not in twists and straining dexterities, but in natural exercises of running, casting, or riding; practised in endurance, not of extraordinary hardship, for that hardens and degrades the body, but of natural hardship, vicissitudes of winter and summer, and cold and heat, yet in a climate where none of these are severe; surrounded also by a certain degree of right luxury, so as to soften and refine the forms of strength; so far as the sight of all this could render the mental intelligence of what is right in human form so acute as to be able to abstract and combine from the best examples so produced, that which was most perfect in each, so far the Greek conceived and attained the ideal

of bodily form: and on the Greek modes of attaining it, as well as on what he produced, as a perfect example of it, chiefly dwell those writers whose opinions on this subject I have collected; wholly losing sight of what seems to me the most important branch of the inquiry, namely the influence for good or evil of the mind upon the bodily shape, the wreck of the mind itself, and the modes by which we may conceive of its restoration.

Now, the operation of the mind upon the body and evidence of it thereon may be considered under the following three general heads.

First, the operation of the intellectual powers upon the features, in the fine cutting and chiselling of them, and removal from them of signs of sensuality and sloth, by which they are blunted and deadened, and substitution of energy and intensity for vacancy and insipidity (by which wants alone the faces of many fair women are utterly spoiled and rendered valueless), and by the keenness given to the eye and fine moulding and development to the brow, of which effects Sir Charles Bell has well noted the desirableness and opposition to brutal types (p. 59, third edition), only this he has not sufficiently observed, that there are certain virtues of the intellect in measure inconsistent with each other, as perhaps great subtlety with great comprehensiveness, and high analytical with high imaginative power, or that at least, if consistent and compatible, their signs upon the features are not the same, so that the outward form cannot express both, without in a measure expressing neither, and so there are certain separate virtues of the outward form correspondent with the more constant employment or more prevailing capacity of the brain, as the piercing keenness, or open and reflective comprehensiveness of the eye and forehead, and that all these virtues of form are ideal, only those the most so which are the signs of the worthiest powers of intellect, though which these may be, we will not at present stay to inquire.

§ 4. Modifications of the bodily ideal owing to influence of mind. First, of Intellect.

The second point to be considered in the influence of mind upon body, is the mode of operation and conjunction of the moral feelings on and with the intellectual powers, and then their conjoint influence on the bodily form. Now, the operation of the right

§ 5. Secondly, of the Moral Feelings.

moral feelings on the intellect is always for the good of the latter, for it is not possible that selfishness should reason rightly in any respect, but must be blind in its estimation of the worthiness of all things, neither anger, for that overpowers the reason or outcries it, neither sensuality, for that overgrows and chokes it, neither agitation, for that has no time to compare things together, neither enmity, for that must be unjust, neither fear, for that exaggerates all things, neither cunning and deceit, for that which is voluntarily untrue will soon be unwittingly so: but the great reasoners are self-command, and trust unagitated, and deep-looking Love, and Faith, which as she is above Reason, so she best holds the reins of it from her high seat: so that they err grossly who think of the right development even of the intellectual type as possible, unless we look to higher sources of beauty first. Nevertheless, though in their operation *upon* them the moral feelings are thus elevatory of the mental faculties, yet in their conjunction *with* them they seem to occupy, in their own fulness, such room as to absorb and overshadow all else, so that the simultaneous exercise of both is in a sort impossible, for which cause we occasionally find the moral part in full development and action, without corresponding expanding of the intellect (though never without healthy condition of it), as in the condition described by Wordsworth,

> "In such high hour
> Of visitation from the Living God,
> Thought was not."

Only I think that if we look far enough, we shall find that it is not intelligence itself, but the immediate act and effort of a laborious, struggling, and imperfect intellectual faculty, with which high moral emotion is inconsistent; and that though we cannot, while we feel deeply, reason shrewdly, yet I doubt if, *except* when we feel deeply, we can ever comprehend fully; so that it is only the climbing and mole-like piercing, and not the sitting upon their central throne, nor emergence into light, of the intellectual faculties which the full heart feeling allows not. Hence, therefore, in the indications of the countenance, they are only the hard cut lines, and rigid settings, and wasted hollows, that speak of past effort and painfulness of mental application, which are inconsistent

with expression of moral feeling, for all these are of infelicitous augury, but not the full and serene development of habitual command in the look, and solemn thought in the brow, only these, in their unison with the signs of emotion, become softened and gradually confounded with a serenity and authority of nobler origin. But of the sweetness which that higher serenity (of happiness), and the dignity which that higher authority (of divine law, and not human reason) can and must stamp on the features, it would be futile to speak here at length, for I suppose that both are acknowledged on all hands, and that there is not any beauty but theirs to which men pay long obedience: at all events, if not by sympathy discovered, it is not in words explicable with what divine lines and lights the exercise of godliness and charity will mould and gild the hardest and coldest countenance, neither to what darkness their departure will consign the loveliest. For there is not any virtue the exercise of which, even momentarily, will not impress a new fairness upon the features, neither on them only, but on the whole body, both the intelligence and the moral faculties have operation, for even all the movements and gestures, however slight, are different in their modes according to the mind that governs them, and on the gentleness and decision of just feeling there follows a grace of action, and, through continuance of this a grace of form, which by no discipline may be taught or attained.

§ 6. What beauty is bestowed by them.

The third point to be considered with respect to the corporeal expression of mental character is, that there is a certain period of the soul culture when it begins to interfere with some of the characters of typical beauty belonging to the bodily frame, the stirring of the intellect wearing down the flesh, and the moral enthusiasm burning its way out to heaven, through the emaciation of the earthen vessel; and that there is, in this indication of subduing of the mortal by the immortal part, an ideal glory of perhaps a purer and higher range than that of the more perfect material form. We conceive, I think, more nobly of the weak presence of Paul, than of the fair and ruddy countenance of Daniel.

§ 7. How the soul culture interferes harmfully with the bodily ideal.

Now, be it observed that, in our consideration of these three directions of mental influence, we have several times

been compelled to stop short of definite conclusions owing to the apparent inconsistency of certain excellencies and beauties to which they tend, as, first, of different kinds of intellect with each other; and secondly, of the moral faculties with the intellectual (and if we had separately examined the moral emotions, we should have found certain inconsistencies among them also), and again of the soul culture generally with the bodily perfections. Such inconsistencies we should find in the perfections of no other animal. The strength or swiftness of the Dog are not inconsistent with his sagacity, nor is bodily labour in the Ant and Bee destructive of their acuteness of instinct. And this peculiarity of relation among the perfections of man is no result of his fall or sinfulness, but an evidence of his greater nobility, and of the goodness of God towards him. For the individuals of each race of lower animals, being not intended to hold among each other those relations of charity which are the privilege of humanity, are not adapted to each other's assistance, admiration, or support, by differences of power and function. But the Love of the human race is increased by their individual differences, and the Unity of the Creature, as before we saw of all unity, made perfect by each having something to bestow and to receive, bound to the rest by a thousand various necessities and various gratitudes, humility in each rejoicing to admire in his fellow that which he finds not in himself, and each being in some respect the complement of his race. Therefore, in investigating the signs of the ideal or perfect type of humanity, we must not presume on the singleness of that type, and yet, on the other hand, we must cautiously distinguish between differences conceivably existing in a perfect state, and differences resulting from immediate and present operation of the Adamite curse. Of which the former are differences that bind, and the latter that separate. For although we can suppose the ideal or perfect human heart, and the perfect human intelligence, equally adapted to receive every right sensation and pursue every order of truth, yet as it is appointed for some to be in authority and others in obedience, some in solitary functions and others in relative ones, some to receive and others to

§ 8. The inconsistency among the effects of the Mental Virtues on the form:

§ 9. Is a sign of God's kind purpose towards the race.

give, some to teach and some to discover; and as all these varieties of office are not only conceivable as existing in a perfect state of man, but seem almost to be implied by it, and at any rate cannot be done away with but by a total change of his constitution and dependencies, of which the imagination can take no hold; so there are habits and capacities of expression induced by these various offices, which admit of many separate ideals of equal perfection, according to the functions of the creatures, so that there is an ideal of Authority, of Judgment, of Affection, of Reason, and of Faith, neither can any combination of these ideals be attained, not that the just judge is to be supposed incapable of affection, nor the king incapable of obedience, but as it is impossible that any essence short of the Divine should at the same instant be equally receptive of all emotions, those emotions which, by right and order have the most usual victory, both leave the stamp of their habitual presence on the body, and render the individual more and more susceptible of them in proportion to the frequency of their prevalent recurrence; added to which causes of distinctive character are to be taken into account the differences of age and sex, though seemingly of more finite influence, cannot be banished from any human conception. David, ruddy and of a fair countenance, with the brook stone of deliverance in his hand, is not more ideal than David leaning on the old age of Barzillai, returning chastened to his kingly home. And they who are as the angels of God in heaven, yet cannot be conceived as so assimilated that their different experiences and affections upon earth shall then be forgotten and effectless: the child taken early to his place cannot be imagined to wear there such a body, nor to have such thoughts, as the glorified apostle who has finished his course and kept the faith on earth. And so whatever perfections and likeness of love we may attribute to either the tried or the crowned creatures, there is the difference of the stars in glory among them yet; differences of original gifts, though not of occupying till their Lord come, different dispensations of trial and of trust, of sorrow and support, both in their own inward, variable hearts, and in their positions of exposure or of peace, of the gourd shadow and the smiting sun, of calling at heat of day or

§ 10. Consequent separation and difference of Ideals.

eleventh hour, of the house unroofed by faith, and the clouds opened by revelation: differences in warning, in mercies, in sicknesses, in signs, in time of calling to account; alike only they all are by that which is not of them, but the gift of God's unchangeable mercy. "I will give unto this last even as unto thee."

§ 11. The *effects* of the Adamite curse are to be distinguished from signs of its immediate activity.

Hence, then, be it observed, that what we must determinedly banish from the human form and countenance, in our seeking of its ideal, is not everything which can be ultimately traced to the Adamite Fall for its cause, but only the immediate operation and presence of the degrading power of sin. For there is not any part of our feeling or nature, nor can there be through eternity, which shall not be in some way influenced and affected by the fall, and that not in any way of degradation, for the renewing in the divinity of Christ is a nobler condition than ever that of Paradise, and yet throughout eternity it must imply and refer to the disobedience, and the corrupt state of sin and death, and the suffering of Christ himself, which can we conceive of any redeemed soul as for an instant forgetting, or as remembering without sorrow? Neither are the alternations of joy and such sorrow as by us is inconceivable, being only as it were a softness and silence in the pulse of an infinite felicity, inconsistent with the state even of the unfallen, for the angels, who rejoice over repentance, cannot but feel an uncomprehended pain as they try and try again in vain, whether they may not warm hard hearts with the brooding of their kind wings. So that we have not to banish from the ideal countenance the evidences of sorrow, nor of past suffering, nor even of past and conquered sin, but only the immediate operation of any evil, or the immediate coldness and hollowness of any good emotion. And hence in that contest before noted, between the body and the soul, we may often have to indicate the body as far conquered and outworn, and with signs of hard struggle and bitter pain upon it, and yet without ever diminishing the purity of its ideal; and because it is not in the power of any human imagination to reason out or conceive the countless modifications of experience, suffering, and separated feeling, which

§ 12. Which latter only are to be banished from ideal form.

have modelled and written their indelible images in various order upon every human countenance, so no right ideal can be reached by any combination of feature nor by any moulding and melting of individual beauties together, and still less without model or example conceived; but there is a perfect ideal to be wrought out of every face around us that has on its forehead the writing and the seal of the angel ascending from the East[1], by the earnest study and penetration of the written history thereupon, and the banishing of the blots and stains, wherein we will see in all that is human, the visible and instant operation of unconquered Sin.

§ 13. Ideal form is only to be obtained by portraiture.

Now I see not how any of the steps of the argument by which we have arrived at this conclusion can be evaded, and yet it would be difficult to state anything more directly opposite to the usual teaching and practice of artists. It is usual to hear portraiture opposed to the pursuit of ideality, and yet we find that no face can be ideal which is not a portrait. Of this general principle, however, there are certain modifications which we must presently state; but let us first, however, pursue it a little farther and deduce its practical consequences.

These are, first, that the pursuit of idealism in humanity, as of idealism in lower nature, can be successful only when followed through the most constant, patient, and humble rendering of actual models, accompanied with that earnest mental as well as ocular study of each, which can interpret all that is written upon it, disentangle the hieroglyphics of its sacred history, rend the veil of the bodily temple, and rightly measure the relations of good and evil contending within it for mastery,[2] that everything done without such study must be shallow and contemptible, that generalization or combination of individual character will end less in the mending than the losing of it, and, except in certain instances of which we shall presently take note, is valueless and vapid, even if it escape being painful from its want of truth, which in these days it often in some measure does, for we indeed find faces about us with want enough of life or wholesome character in them to justify anything. And that habit of the old and great painters of introducing

§ 14. Instances among the greater of the Ideal Masters.

[1] Rev. vii. 2.

[2] Compare Part II. Sec. I. Chap. III. § 6.

portrait into all their highest works, I look to, not as error in them, but as the very source and root of their superiority in all things, for they were too great and too humble not to see in every face about them that which was above them, and which no fancies of theirs could match nor take place of, wherefore we find the custom of portraiture constant with them, both portraiture of study and for purposes of analysis, as with Leonardo; and actual, professed, serviceable, hardworking portraiture of the men of their time, as with Raffaelle, and Titian, and Tintoret; and portraiture of Love, as with Fra Bartolomeo of Savonarola, and Simon Memmi of Petrarch, and Giotto of Dante, and Gentile Bellini of a beloved imagination of Dandolo, and with Raffaelle constantly; and portraiture in real downright necessity of models, even in their noblest works, as was the practice of Ghirlandajo perpetually, and Masaccio and Raffaelle, and manifestly of the men of highest and purest ideal purpose, as again, Giotto, and in his characteristic monkish heads, Angelico, and John Bellini (note especially the St. Christopher at the side of that mighty picture of St. Jerome, at Venice): and so of all: which practice had indeed a perilous tendency for men of debased mind, who used models such as and where they ought not, as Lippi and the corrupted Raffaelle; and is found often at exceeding disadvantage, among men who looked not at their models with intellectual or loving penetration, but took the outside of them, or perhaps took the evil and left the good, as Titian in that academy study at Venice which is called a St. John, and all workers whatsoever that I know of, after Raffaelle's time, as Guido and the Caracci, and such others; but it is nevertheless the necessary and sterling basis of all ideal art, neither has any great man ever been able to do without it, nor dreamed of doing without it even to the close of his days.

§ 15. Evil results of opposite practice in modern times.

And therefore there is not any greater sign of the utter want of vitality and hopefulness in the schools of the present day than that unhappy prettiness and sameness under which they mask, or rather for which they barter, in their lentile thirst, all the birthright and power of nature, which prettiness, wrought out and spun fine in the study, out of empty heads, till it hardly betters the blocks on which

dresses and hair are tried in barbers' windows and milliners' books, cannot but be revolting to any man who has his eyes, even in a measure, open to the divinity of the immortal seal on the common features that he meets in the highways and hedges hourly and momentarily, outreaching all efforts of conception as all power of realization, were it Raffaelle's three times over, even when the glory of the wedding garment is not there.

So far, then, of the use of the model and the preciousness of it in all art, from the highest to the lowest. But the use of the model is not all. It must be used in a certain way, and on this choice of right or wrong way all our ends are at stake, for the art, which is of no power without the model, is of pernicious and evil power if the model be wrongly used. What the right use is, has been at least established, if not fully explained, in the argument by which we arrived at the general principle. The right ideal is to be reached, we have asserted, only by the banishment of the immediate signs of sin upon the countenance and body. How, therefore, are the signs of sin to be known and separated?

§ 16. The right use of the model.

No intellectual operation is here of any avail. There is not any reasoning by which the evidences of depravity are to be traced in movements of muscle or forms of feature; there is not any knowledge, nor experience, nor diligence of comparison that can be of avail. Here, as throughout the operation of the Theoretic faculty, the perception is altogether moral, an instinctive love and clinging to the lines of light. Nothing but love can read the letters, nothing but sympathy catch the sound, there is no pure passion that can be understood or painted except by pureness of heart; the foul or blunt feeling will see itself in everything, and set down blasphemies; it will see Beelzebub in the casting out of devils, it will find its God of flies in every alabaster box of precious ointment. The indignation of zeal toward God (nemesis) it will take for anger against man, faith and veneration it will miss of, as not comprehending, charity it will turn into lust, compassion into pride, every virtue it will go over against, like Shimei, casting dust. But the right Christian mind will in like manner find its own image wherever it exists, it will seek for what it loves, and draw it out of all dens and caves,

§ 17. Ideal form to be reached only by Love.

and it will believe in its being, often when it cannot see it, and always turn away its eyes from beholding vanity; and so it will lie lovingly over all the faults and rough places of the human heart, as the snow from heaven does over the hard, and black, and broken mountain rocks, following their forms truly, and yet catching light for them to make them fair, and that must be a steep and unkindly crag indeed which it cannot cover.

§ 18. Practical principles deducible.

Now of this spirit there will always be little enough in the world, and it cannot be given nor taught by men, and so it is of little use to insist on it farther, only I may note some practical points respecting the ideal treatment of human form, which may be of use in these thoughtless days. There is not the face, I have said, which the painter may not make ideal if he choose, but that subtle feeling which shall find out all of good that there is in any given countenance is not, except by concern for other things than art, to be acquired. But certain broad indications of evil there are which the bluntest feeling may perceive, and which the habit of distinguishing and casting out would both ennoble the schools of art, and lead in time to greater acuteness of perception with respect to the less explicable characters of soul beauty.

§ 19. Expressions chiefly destructive of ideal character. 1st, Pride.

Those signs of evil which are commonly most manifest on the human features are roughly divisible into these four kinds, the signs of pride, of sensuality, of fear, and of cruelty. Any one of which will destroy the ideal character of the countenance and body.

Now of these, the first, pride, is perhaps the most destructive of all the four, seeing it is the undermost and original story of all sin, and it is base also from the necessary foolishness of it, because at its best, when grounded on a just estimation of our own elevation or superiority above certain others, it cannot but imply that our eyes look downward only, and have never been raised above our own measure, for there is not the man so lofty in his standing nor capacity but he must be humble in thinking of the cloud habitation and far sight of the angelic intelligences above him, and in perceiving what infinity there is of things he cannot know nor even reach unto, as it stands compared with that little body of things he can reach, and of which

nevertheless he can altogether understand not one; not to speak of that wicked and fond attributing of such excellency as he may have to himself, and thinking of it as his own getting, which is the real essence and criminality of Pride, nor of those viler forms of it, founded on false estimation of things beneath us and irrational contemning of them: but taken at its best, it is still base to that degree that there is no grandeur of feature which it cannot destroy and make despicable, so that the first step towards the ennobling of any face is the ridding it of its vanity; to which aim there cannot be anything more contrary than that principle of portraiture which prevails with us in these days, whose end seems to be the expression of vanity throughout, in face and in all circumstances of accompaniment, tending constantly to insolence of attitude, and levity and haughtiness of expression, and worked out farther in mean accompaniments of worldly splendour and possession, together with hints or proclamations of what the person has done or supposes himself to have done, which, if known, it is gratuitous in the portrait to exhibit, and, if unknown it is insolent in the portrait to proclaim: whence has arisen such a school of portraiture as must make the people of the nineteenth century the shame of their descendants, and the butt of all time. To which practices are to be opposed both the glorious severity of Holbein, and the mighty and simple modesty of Raffaelle, Titian, Giorgione, and Tintoret, with whom armour does not constitute the warrior, neither silk the dame. And from what feeling the dignity of that portraiture arose is best traceable at Venice, where we find their victorious doges painted neither in the toil of battle nor the triumph of return, nor set forth with thrones and curtains of state, but kneeling always crownless, and returning thanks to God for his help, or as priests, interceding for the nation in its affliction. But this feeling and its results have been so well traced by Rio[1], that I need not speak of it farther.

§ 20. Portraiture ancient and modern.

That second destroyer of Ideal form, the appearance of sensual character, though not less fatal in its operation on modern art, is more difficult to trace, owing to its peculiar subtlety. For it is not possible to say by what minute differences the right

§ 21. Secondly, Sensuality.

[1] De la Poësie Chretienne. Forme de l'Art, Chap. viii.

conception of the human form is separated from that which is luscious and foul: for the root of all is in the love and seeking of the painter, who, if of impure and feeble mind, will cover all that he touches with clay staining, as Bandinelli puts a foul scent of human flesh about his marble Christ, and as many whom I will not here name, among moderns; but if of mighty mind or pure, may pass through all places of foulness, and none will stay upon him, as Michael Angelo, or he will baptize all things and wash them with pure water, as our own Stothard. Now, so far as this power is dependent on the seeking of the artist, and is only to be seen in the work of good and spiritually-minded men, it is vain to attempt to teach or illustrate it, neither is it here the place to take note of the way in which it belongs to the representation of the mental image of things, instead of things themselves, of which we are to speak in treating of the imagination; but thus much may here be noted of broad, practical principle, that the purity of flesh painting depends in very considerable measure on the intensity and warmth of its colour. For if it be opaque, and clay cold, and colourless and devoid of all the radiance and life of flesh, the lines of its true beauty, being severe and firm, will become so hard in the loss of the glow and gradation by which nature illustrates them, that the painter will be compelled to sacrifice them for a luscious fulness and roundness, in order to give the conception of flesh; which, being done, destroys ideality of form as of colour, and gives all over to lasciviousness of surface; showing also that the painter sought for this, and this only, since otherwise he had not taken a subject in which he knew himself compelled to surrender all sources of dignity. Whereas right splendour of colour both bears out a nobler severity of form, and is in itself purifying and cleansing, like fire, furnishing also to the painter an excuse for the choice of his subject, seeing that he may be supposed as not having painted it but in the admiration of its abstract glory of colour and form, and with no unworthy seeking. But the mere power of perfect and glowing colour will in some sort, redeem even a debased tendency of mind itself, as eminently the case with Titian, who, though of little feeling, often treating base subjects, or elevated subjects basely, as in the disgusting Magdalen of the Pitti Palace, and that of the

§ 22. How connected with impurity of colour,

§ 23. And prevented by its splendour,

Barberigo at Venice, yet redeems all by his glory of hue, so that he cannot paint altogether coarsely, and with Giorgione, who had nobler and more serious intellect, the sense of nudity is utterly lost, and there is no need nor desire of concealment any more, but his naked figures move among the trees like fiery pillars, and lie on the grass like flakes of sunshine.[1] With the religious painters, on the other hand, such nudity as they were compelled to treat is redeemed as much by severity of form and hardness of line as by colour, so that generally their draped figures are preferable, as in the Francia of our own gallery. But these, with Michael Angelo and the Venetians, except Titian, form a great group, pure in sight and aim, between which and all other schools by which the nude has been treated, there is a gulf fixed, and all the rest, compared with them, seem striving how best to illustrate that of Spencer.

§ 24. Or by severity of drawing.

> "Of all God's works which doe this worlde adorn,
> There is no one more faire, and excellent
> Than is man's body both for power and forme
> Whiles it is kept in sober government.
> But none than it more foul and indecent
> Distempered through misrule and passions bace."

Of these last, however, with whom ideality is lost, there are some worthier than others, according to that measure of colour they reach, and power they possess. When much may be forgiven to Rubens (as to our own Etty), less, as I think, to Correggio, who with less apparent and evident coarseness has more of inherent sensuality, wrought out with attractive and luscious refinement, and that alike in all subjects, as in the Madonna of the Incoronazione, over the high altar of San Giovanni at Parma, of which the head and upper portion of the figure, now preserved in the library, might serve as a model of attitude and expression to a ballet figurante[2]: and again in the lascivious St. Catherine of the Giorno, and in the Charioted Diana, (both at Parma), not to name any of his works of aim more definitely evil. Beneath which again will fall the works devoid alike of art and

§ 25. Degrees of Descent in this respect: Rubens, Correggio, and Guido.

[1] As in the noble Louvre picture.

[2] The Madonna turns her back to Christ, and bends her head over her shoulder to receive the crown, the arms being folded with studied grace over the bosom.

decency, as that Susannah of Guido, in our own gallery, and so we may descend to the absolute clay of the moderns, only noticing in all how much of what is evil and base in subject or tendency, is redeemed by what is pure and right in hue, so that I do not assert that the purpose and object of many of the grander painters of the nude, as of Titian for instance, was always elevated, but only that we, who cannot paint the lamp of fire within the earthen pitcher, must take other weapons in our left hands. And it is to be noted, also, that in climates where the body can be more openly and frequently visited by sun and weather, the nude both comes to be regarded in a way more grand and pure, as necessarily awakening no ideas of base kind (as pre-eminently with the Greeks), and also from that exposure receives a firmness and sunny elasticity very different from the silky softness of the clothed nations of the north, where every model necessarily looks as if accidentally undressed; and hence from the very fear and doubt with which we approach the nude, it becomes expressive of evil, and for that daring frankness of the old men, which seldom missed of human grandeur, even when it failed of holy feeling, we have substituted a mean, carpeted, gauze-veiled, mincing sensuality of curls and crisping-pins, out of which I believe nothing can come but moral enervation and mental paralysis.

§ 26. And Modern art.

Respecting those two other vices of the human face, the expressions of fear and ferocity, there is less to be noted, as they only occasionally enter into the conception of character; only it is most necessary to make careful distinction between the conception of power, destructiveness, or majesty, in matter, influence, or agent, and the actual Fear of any of these, for it is possible to conceive of terribleness, without being in a position obnoxious to the danger of it, and so without fear, and the feeling arising from this contemplation of dreadfulness, ourselves being in safety, as of a stormy sea from the shore, is properly termed awe, and is a most noble passion; whereas fear, mortal and extreme, may be felt respecting things ignoble, as the falling from a window, and without any conception of terribleness or majesty in the thing, or the accident dreaded; and even when Fear is felt respecting

§ 27. Thirdly, Ferocity and fear. The latter how to be distinguished from Awe.

things sublime, as thunder, or storm of battle, yet the tendency of it is to destroy all power of contemplation of their majesty, and to freeze and shrink all the intellect into a shaking heap of clay, for absolute acute fear is of the same unworthiness and contempt from whatever source it arise, and degrades the mind and the outward bearing of the body alike, even though it be among hail of heaven and fire running along the ground. And so among the children of God, while there is always that fearful and bowed apprehension of his majesty, and that sacred dread of all offence to him, which is called the Fear of God, yet of real and essential fear there is not any, but clinging of confidence to him as their Rock, Fortress, and Deliverer, and perfect Love, and casting out of fear, so that it is not possible that while the mind is rightly bent on him, there should be dread of anything either earthly or supernatural, and the more dreadful seems the height of his majesty, the less fear they feel that dwell in the shadow of it ("Of whom shall I be afraid?"), so that they are as David was, devoted to his fear; whereas, on the other hand, those who, if they may help it, never conceive of God, but thrust away all thought and memory of him, and in his real terribleness and omnipresence fear him not nor know him, yet are of real, acute, piercing, and ignoble fear, haunted for evermore; fear inconceiving and desperate, that calls to the rocks, and hides in the dust; and hence the peculiar baseness of the expression of terror, a baseness attributed to it in all times, and among all nations, as of a passion atheistical, brutal, and profane. So, also, it is always joined with ferocity, which is of all passions the least human; for of sensual desires there is license to men, as necessity; and of vanity there is intellectual cause, so that when seen in a brute it is pleasant, and a sign of good wit; and of fear there is at times necessity and excuse, as being allowed for prevention of harm; but of ferocity there is no excuse nor palliation, but it is pure essence of tiger and demon, and it casts on the human face the paleness alike of the horse of Death, and the ashes of Hell.

§ 28. Holy Fear, how distinct from human Terror.

§ 29. Ferocity is joined always with Fear. Its unpardonableness.

Wherefore, of all subjects that can be admitted to sight, the expressions of fear and ferocity are the most foul and

detestable, and so there is in them I know not what sympathetic attractiveness for minds cowardly and base, as the vulgar of most nations, and forasmuch as they are easily rendered by men who can render nothing else, they are often trusted in by the herd of painters incapable and profane, as in that monstrous abortion of the first room of the Louvre, called the Deluge, whose subject is pure, acute, mortal fear; and so generally the senseless horrors of the modern French schools, spawn of the guillotine: also there is not a greater test of grandeur or meanness of mind than the expressions it will seek for and develope in the features and forms of men in fierce strife, whether determination and devotion, and all the other attributes of that unselfishness which constitutes heroism, as in the warrior of Agasias; and distress not agitated nor unworthy, though mortal, as in the dying gladiator, or brutal ferocity and butchered agony, of which the lowest and least palliated examples are those battles of Salvator Rosa which none but a man base-born and thief-bred, could have dwelt upon for an instant without sickening, of which I will only name that example in the Pitti palace, wherein the chief figure in the foreground is a man with his arm cut off at the shoulder, run through the other hand into the breast with a lance.[1] And manifold instances of the same feeling are to be found in the repainting of the various representations of the Inferno, so common through Italy, more especially that of Orcagna's in the Campo Santo, wherein the few figures near the top that yet remain untouched are grand in their severe drawing and expressions of enduring despair, while those below, repainted by Solazzino, depend for their expressiveness upon torrents of blood; so in the Inferno of Santa Maria Novella, and of the Arena chapel, not to speak of the horrible images of the Passion, by which vulgar Romanism has always striven to excite the languid sympathies of its untaught flocks. Of which foulnesses let us reason no farther, the very image

§ 30. Such expressions how sought by painters powerless and impious.

[1] Compare Michelet, (Du Prêtre, de la Femme, de la Famille,) Chap. III. note. He uses language too violent to be quoted; but excuses Salvator by reference to the savage character of the Thirty Years War. That this excuse has no validity may be proved by comparing the painter's treatment of other subjects. See Sec. II. Chap. III. § 19, note.

and memory of them being pollution, only noticing this, that there has always been a morbid tendency in Romanism towards the contemplation of bodily pain, owing to the attribution of saving power to it, which, like every other moral error, has been of fatal effect in art, leaving not altogether without the stain and blame of it even the highest of the Romanist painters; as Fra Angelico, for instance, who in his Passion subjects always insists weakly on the bodily torture, and is unsparing of blood; and Giotto, though his treatment is usually grander, as in that Crucifixion over the door of the Convent of St. Mark's, where the blood is hardly actual, but issues from the feet in a typical and conventional form, and becomes a crimson cord which is twined strangely beneath about a skull; only that which these holy men did to enhance, even though in their means mistaken, the impression and power of the sufferings of Christ, or of his saints, is always in a measure noble, and to be distinguished with all reverence from the abominations of the irreligious painters following, as of Camillo Procaccini, in one of his martyrdoms in the Gallery of the Brera, at Milan, and other such, whose names may be well spared to the reader.

§ 31. Of passion generally.

These, then, are the four passions whose presence in any degree, on the human face is degradation. But of all passion it is to be generally observed, that it becomes ignoble either when entertained respecting unworthy objects, and therefore shallow or unjustifiable, or when of impious violence, and so destructive of human dignity. Thus Grief is noble or the reverse, according to the dignity and worthiness of the object lamented, and the grandeur of the mind enduring it. The sorrow of mortified vanity or avarice is simply disgusting, even that of bereaved affection may be base if selfish and unrestrained. All grief that convulses the features is ignoble, because it is commonly shallow, and certainly temporary, as in children, though in the shock and shiver of a strong man's features under sudden and violent grief there may be something of sublime. The grief of Guercino's Hagar, in the Brera Gallery at Milan, is partly despicable, partly disgusting, partly ridiculous, it is not the grief of the injured Egyptian, driven forth into the desert with the destiny of a nation in her heart, but of a servant of all

work turned away for stealing tea and sugar. Common painters forget that passion is not absolutely and in itself great or violent, but only in proportion to the weakness of the mind it has to deal with; and that in exaggerating its outward signs, they are not exalting the passion, but evaporating the hero.[1] They think too much of passions as always the same in their nature, forgetting that the love of Achilles is different from the love of Paris, and of Alcestis from that of Laodamia. The use and value of passion is not as a subject of contemplation in itself, but as it breaks up the fountains of the great deep of the human mind, or displays its mightiness and ribbed majesty, as mountains are seen in their stability best among the coil of clouds; whence, in fine, I think it is to be held that all passion which attains overwhelming power, so that it is not as resisting, but as conquered, that the creature is contemplated, is unfit for high art, and destructive of the ideal character of the countenance: and, in this respect, I cannot but hold Raphael to have erred in his endeavour to express passion of such acuteness in the human face; as in the fragment of the Massacre of the Innocents in our own gallery, (wherein, repainted though it be, I suppose the purpose of the master is yet to be understood), for if such subjects are to be represented at all, their entire expression may be given without degrading the face, as we shall presently see done with unspeakable power by Tintoret[2], and I think that all subjects of the kind, all human misery, slaughter, famine, plague, peril, and crime, are better in the main avoided, as of unprofitable and hardening influence, unless so far as out of the suffering, hinted rather than expressed, we may raise into nobler relief the eternal enduring of fortitude and affection, of mercy and self devotion, or when, as by the threshing-floor of Ornan, and by the cave of Lazarus, the angel of the Lord is to be seen in the chastisement, and his love to be manifested to the despair of men.

§ 32. It is never to be for itself exhibited—at least on the face.

Thus, then, we have in some sort enumerated those evil signs which are most necessary to be shunned in the seeking

[1] "The fire, that mounts the liquor, till it run o'er
In seeming to augment it, wastes it." Henry VIII.

[2] Sec. II. Chap. III. § 22.

of Ideal beauty [1], though it is not the knowledge of them, but the dread and hatred of them, which will effectually aid the painter; as on the other hand it is not mere admission of the loveliness of good and holy expression that its subtle characters are to be traced. Raphael himself, questioned on this subject, made doubtful answer, he probably could not trace through what early teaching, or by what dies of emotion the image had been sealed upon his heart. Our own Bacon, who well saw the impossibility of reaching it by the combination of many separate beauties, yet explains not the nature of that "kind of felicity" to which he attributes success. I suppose those who have conceived and wrought the loveliest things, have done so by no theorizing, but in simple labour of love, and could not, if put to a bar of rationalism, defend all points of what they had done, but painted it in their own delight, and to the delight of all besides, only always with that respect of conscience and "fear of swerving from that which is right, which maketh diligent observers of circumstances, the loose regard whereof is the nurse of vulgar folly, no less than Solomon's attention thereunto was of natural furtherances the most effectual to make him eminent above others, for he gave good heed, and pierced everything to the very ground." [2]

§ 33. Recapitulation.

With which good heed, and watching of the instants when men feel warmly and rightly, as the Indians do for the diamond in their washing of sand, and that with the desire and hope of finding true good in men, and not with the ready vanity that sets itself to fiction instantly, and carries its potter's wheel about with it always (off which there will come only clay vessels of regular shape after all), instead of the pure mirror that can show the seraph standing by the human body—standing as signal to the heavenly land [3]: with this heed and this charity, there are none of us

[1] Let it be observed that it is always of beauty, not of human character in its lower and criminal modifications, that we have been speaking. That variety of Character, therefore, which we have affirmed to be necessary, is the variety of Giotto and Angelico, not of Hogarth. Works concerned with the exhibition of general character, are to be spoken of in the consideration of Ideas of Relation.

[2] Hooker, Book V. Chap. I. § 2.

[3] Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat
And by the holy rood,

that may not bring down that lamp upon his path of which Spenser sang:—

> That Beauty is not, as fond men misdeem
> An outward show of things, that only seem;
> But that fair lamp, from whose celestial ray
> That light proceeds, which kindleth lover's fire,
> Shall never be extinguished nor decay.
> But when the vital spirits do expire,
> Unto her native planet shall retire,
> For it is heavenly born and cannot die,
> Being a parcel of the purest sky.

CHAPTER XV

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS RESPECTING THE THEORETIC FACULTY

§ 1. There are no sources of the emotion of beauty more than those found in things visible.

Of the sources of Beauty open to us in the visible world, we have now obtained a view which, however scanty in its detail, is yet general in its range. Of no other sources than these visible ones, can we, by any effort in our present condition of existence, conceive. For what revelations have been made to humanity inspired, or caught up to heaven of things to the heavenly region belonging, have been either by unspeakable words, which is not lawful for a man to utter, or else by their very nature incommunicable, except in types and shadows; and ineffable by words belonging to earth, for of things different from the visible, words appropriated to the visible can convey no image. How different from earthly gold that clear pavement of the city might have seemed to the eyes of St. John, we of unreceived sight cannot know; neither of that strange jasper and sardine can we conceive the likeness which he assumed that sat on the throne above the crystal sea; neither what seeming that was of slaying that the Root of David bore in the midst

> A man all light, a seraph man
> By every corse there stood.
> This seraph band, each waved his hand,
> It was a heavenly sight;
> They stood as signals to the land,
> Each one a lovely light. Ancient Mariner.

of the elders; neither what change it was upon the form of the fourth of them that walked in the furnace of Dura, that even the wrath of Idolatry knew for the likeness of the Son of God. The knowing that is here permitted to us is either of things outward only, as in those it is whose eyes Faith never opened, or else of that dark part that her glass shows feebly, of things supernatural, that gleaming of the Divine form among the mortal crowd, which all may catch if they will climb the sycamore and wait: nor how much of God's abiding at the house may be granted to those that so seek, and how much more may be opened to them in the breaking of bread, cannot be said; but of that only we can reason which is in a measure revealed to all, of that which is by constancy and purity of affection to be found in the things and the beings around us upon earth. Now among all those things whose beauty we have hitherto examined, there has been a measure of imperfection. Either inferiority of kind, as the beauty of the lower animals, or resulting from degradation, as in man himself; and although in considering the beauty of human form, we arrived at some conception of restoration, yet we found that even the restoration must be in some respect, imperfect, as incapable of embracing all qualities, moral and intellectual, at once, neither to be freed from all signs of former evil done or suffered. Consummate beauty, therefore, is not to be found on earth, though often such intense measure of it as shall drown all capacity of receiving; neither is it to be respecting humanity legitimately conceived. But by certain operations of the imagination upon ideas of beauty received from things around us, it is possible to conceive respecting superhuman creatures (of that which is more than creature, no creature ever conceived) a beauty in some sort greater than we see. Of this beauty, however, it is impossible to determine anything until we have traced the imaginative operations to which it owes its being, of which operations this much may be prematurely said, that they are not creative, that no new ideas are elicited by them, and that their whole function is only a certain dealing with, concentrating or mode of regarding the impressions received from external things, that therefore, in the beauty to which

§ 2. What imperfection exists in visible things. How in a sort by imagination removable.

§ 3. Which, however, affects not our present conclusions.

they will conduct us, there will be found no new element, but only a peculiar combination or phase of those elements that we now know, and that therefore we may at present draw all the conclusions with respect to the rank of the theoretic faculty, which the knowledge of its subject matter can warrant.

We have seen that this subject matter is referable to four general heads. It is either the record of conscience, printed in things external, or it is a symbolizing of Divine attributes in matter, or it is the felicity of living things, or the perfect fulfilment of their duties and functions. In all cases it is something Divine, either the approving voice of God, the glorious symbol of him, the evidence of his kind presence, or the obedience to his will by him induced and supported.

§ 4. The four sources from which the Pleasure of Beauty is derived are all divine.

All these subjects of contemplation are such as we may suppose will remain sources of pleasure to the perfected Spirit throughout eternity. Divine in their nature, they are addressed to the immortal part of men.

There remain, however, two points to be noticed before I can hope that this conclusion will be frankly accepted by the reader. If it be the moral part of us to which Beauty addresses itself, how does it happen, it will be asked, that it is ever found in the works of impious men, and how is it possible for such to desire or conceive it?

§ 5. What objections may be made to this conclusion.

On the other hand, how does it happen that men in high state of moral culture are often insensible to the influence of material beauty, and insist feebly upon it as an instrument of soul culture.

These two objections I shall endeavour briefly to answer, not that they can be satisfactorily treated without that examination of the whole body of great works of detailed art, on which I purpose to enter in the following volume. For the right determination of these two questions is indeed the whole end and aim of my labour (and if it could be here accomplished, I should bestow no effort farther), namely, the proving that no supreme power of art can be attained by impious men; and that the neglect of art, as an interpreter of divine things, has been of evil consequence to the Christian world.

At present, however, I would only meet such objections as must immediately arise in the reader's mind.

And first, it will be remembered that I have, throughout the examination of Typical beauty, asserted its instinctive power, the moral meaning of it being only discoverable by faithful thought. Now this instinctive sense of it varies in intensity among men, being given, like the hearing ear of music, to some more than to others: and if those to whom it is given in large measure be unfortunately men of impious or unreflecting spirit, it is very possible that the perceptions of beauty should be by them cultivated on principles merely aesthetic, and so lose their hallowing power; for though the good seed in them is altogether divine, yet, there being no blessing in the springing thereof, it brings forth wild grapes in the end. And yet these wild grapes are well discernible, like the deadly gourds of Gilgal. There is in all works of such men a taint and stain, and jarring discord, blacker and louder exactly in proportion to the moral deficiency, of which the best proof and measure is to be found in their treatment of the human form (since in landscape it is nearly impossible to introduce definite expression of evil), of which the highest beauty has been attained only once, and then by no system taught painter, but by a most holy Dominican monk of Fiesole, and beneath him all stoop lower and lower in proportion to their inferior sanctity, though with more or less attainment of that which is noble, according to their intellectual power and earnestness, as Raphael in his St. Cecilia (a mere study of a passionate, dark-eyed, large formed Italian model), and even Perugino, in that there is about his noblest faces a short coming, indefinable; an absence of the full out-pouring of the sacred spirit that there is in Angelico; traceable, I doubt not, to some deficiencies and avaricious flaws of his heart, whose consequences in his conduct were such as to give Vasari hope that his lies might stick to him (for the contradiction of which in the main, if there be not contradiction enough in every line that the hand of Perugino drew, compare Rio de la Poesie Chrêtienne, and note also what Rio has singularly missed observing, that Perugino, in his portrait of himself in the Florence Gallery, has put a scroll into the hand, with the words "Timete

§ 6. Typical beauty may be aesthetically pursued. Instances.

Deum," thus surely indicating that which he considered his duty and message:) and so all other even of the sacred painters, not to speak of the lower body of men in whom, on the one hand, there is marked sensuality and impurity in all that they seek of beauty, as in Correggio and Guido, or, on the other, a want of the sense of beauty itself, as in Rubens and Titian, showing itself in the adoption of coarse types of feature and form; sometimes also (of which I could find instances in modern times), in a want of evidence of delight in what they do; so that, after they have rendered some passage of exceeding beauty, they will suffer some discordant point to interfere with it, and it will not hurt them, as if they had no pleasure in that which was best, but had done it in inspiration that was not profitable to them, as deaf men might touch an instrument with a feeling in their heart, which yet returns not outwardly upon them, and so know not when they play false: and sometimes by total want of choice, for there is a choice of love in all rightly tempered men, not that ignorant and insolent choice which rejects half nature as empty of the right, but that pure choice that fetches the right out of everything; and where this is wanting, we may see men walking up and down in dry places, finding no rest, ever and anon doing something noble, and yet not following it up, but dwelling the next instant on something impure or profitless with the same intensity and yet impatience, so that they are ever wondered at and never sympathized with, and while they dazzle all they lead none; and then, beneath these again, we find others on whose works there are definite signs of evil mind, ill repressed, and then inability to avoid, and at last perpetual seeking for and feeding upon horror and ugliness, and filthiness of sin, as eminently in Salvator and Caravaggio, and the lower Dutch schools, only in these last less painfully as they lose the villainous in the brutal, and the horror of crime in its idiocy.

§ 7. How interrupted by false feeling.

But secondly, it is to be noted that it is neither by us ascertainable what moments of pure feeling or aspiration may occur to men of minds apparently cold and lost, nor by us to be pronounced through what instruments, and in what strangely occurrent voices, God may choose to communicate good to men. It seems to me that much of what is great,

and to all men beneficial, has been wrought by those who neither intended nor knew the good they did, and that many mighty harmonies have been discoursed by instruments that had been dumb or discordant, but that God knew their stops. The Spirit of Prophecy consisted with the avarice of Balaam, and the disobedience of Saul. Could we spare from its page that parable, which he said, who saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open, though we know that the sword of his punishment was then sharp in its sheath beneath him in the plains of Moab? or shall we not lament with David over the shield cast away on the Gilboa mountains, of him to whom God gave *another heart* that day, when he turned his back to go from Samuel? It is not our part to look hardly, nor to look always, to the character or the deeds of men, but to accept from all of them, and to hold fast that which we can prove good, and feel to be ordained for us. We know that whatever good there is in them is itself divine, and wherever we see the virtue of ardent labour and self-surrendering to a single purpose, wherever we find constant reference made to the written scripture of natural beauty, this at least we know is great and good, this we know is not granted by the counsel of God without purpose, nor maintained without result: Their interpretation we may accept, into their labour we may enter, but they themselves must look to it, if what they do has no intent of good, nor any reference to the Giver of all gifts. Selfish in their industry, unchastened in their wills, ungrateful for the Spirit that is upon them, they may yet be helmed by that Spirit whithersoever the Governor listeth; involuntary instruments they may become of others good; unwillingly they may bless Israel, doubtingly discomfit Amalek, but short coming there will be of their glory, and sure, of their punishment.

§ 8. Greatness and truth are sometimes by the Deity sustained and spoken in and through Evil men.

I believe I shall be able, incidentally, in succeeding investigations, to prove this short coming, and to examine the sources of it, not absolutely indeed (seeing that all reasoning on the characters of men must be treacherous, our knowledge on this head being as corrupt as it is scanty, while even in living with them it is impossible to trace the working, or estimate the errors of great and self-secreted

minds); but at least enough to establish the general principle upon such grounds of fact as may satisfy those who demand the practical proof (often in a measure impossible), of things which can hardly be doubted in their rational consequence. At present, it would be useless to enter on an examination for which we have no materials, and I proceed, therefore, to notice that other and opposite error of Christian men in thinking that there is little use or value in the operation of the Theoretic faculty, not that I at present either feel myself capable, or that this is the place for the discussion of that vast question of the operation of Taste (as it is called) on the minds of men, and the national value of its teaching, but I wish shortly to reply to that objection which might be urged to the real moral dignity of the faculty, that many Christian men seem to be in themselves without it, and even to discountenance it in others.

§ 9. The second objection arising from the coldness of Christian men to external beauty.

It has been said by Schiller, in his letters on aesthetic culture, that the sense of beauty never farthered the performance of a single duty.

Although this gross and inconceivable falsity will hardly be accepted by any one in so many terms, seeing that there are few so utterly lost but that they receive, and know that they receive, at certain moments, strength of some kind, or rebuke from the appealings of outward things; and that it is not possible for a Christian man to walk across so much as a rood of the natural earth, with mind unagitated and rightly poised, without receiving strength and hope from some stone, flower, leaf, or sound, nor without a sense of a dew falling upon him out of the sky; though, I say this falsity is not wholly and in terms admitted, yet it seems to be partly and practically so in much of the doing and teaching even of holy men, who in the recommending of the love of God to us, refer but seldom to those things in which it is most abundantly and immediately shown; though they insist much on his giving of bread, and raiment, and health (which he gives to all inferior creatures), they require us not to thank him for that glory of his works which he has permitted us alone to perceive: They tell us often to meditate in the closet, but they send us not, like Isaac, into the fields at

even, they dwell on the duty of self-denial, but they exhibit not the duty of delight. Now there are reasons for this, manifold, in the toil and warfare of an earnest mind, which, in its efforts at the raising of men from utter loss and misery, has often but little time or disposition to take heed of anything more than the bare life, and of those so occupied it is not for us to judge; but I think that, of the weaknesses, distresses, vanities, schisms, and sins, which often even in the holiest men, diminish their usefulness, and mar their happiness, there would be fewer if, in their struggle with nature fallen, they sought for more aid from nature undestroyed. It seems to me that the real sources of bluntness in the feelings towards the splendour of the grass and glory of the flower, are less to be found in ardour of occupation, in seriousness of compassion, or heavenliness of desire, than in the turning of the eye at intervals of rest too selfishly within; the want of power to shake off the anxieties of actual and near interest, and to leave results in God's hands; the scorn of all that does not seem immediately apt for our purposes, or open to our understanding, and perhaps something of pride, which desires rather to investigate than to feel. I believe that the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian church has ever suffered, has been the effort of men to earn, rather than to receive, their salvation; and that the reason that preaching is so commonly ineffectual is, that it calls on men oftener to work for God, than to behold God working for them. If, for every rebuke that we utter of men's vices, we put forth a claim upon their hearts; if for every assertion of God's demands from them, we could substitute a display of his kindness to them; if side by side, with every warning of death, we could exhibit proofs and promises of immortality; if, in fine, instead of assuming the being of an awful Deity, which men, though they cannot and dare not deny, are always unwilling, sometimes unable, to conceive, we were to show them a near, visible, inevitable, but all beneficent Deity, whose presence makes the earth itself a heaven, I think there would be fewer deaf children sitting in the market-place. At all

§ 10. Reasons for this coldness in the anxieties of the world. These anxieties overwrought and criminal.

§ 11. Evil consequences of such coldness.

§ 12. Theoria the Service of Heaven.

events, whatever may be the inability, in this present life, to mingle the full enjoyment of the Divine works with the full discharge of every practical duty, and confessedly in many cases this must be, let us not attribute the inconsistency to any indignity of the faculty of contemplation, but to the sin and the suffering of the fallen state, and the change of order from the keeping of the garden to the tilling of the ground. We cannot say how far it is right or agreeable with God's will, while men are perishing round about us, while grief, and pain, and wrath, and impiety, and death, and all the powers of the air, are working wildly and evermore, and the cry of blood going up to heaven, that any of us should take hand from the plough; but this we know, that there will come a time when the Service of God shall be the beholding of him; and though in these stormy seas, where we are now driven up and down, his Spirit is dimly seen on the face of the waters, and we are left to cast anchors out of the stern, and wish for the day, that day will come, when, with the evangelists on the crystal and stable sea, all the creatures of God shall be full of eyes within, and there shall be "no more curse, but his servants shall serve him, and shall see his Face."

SECTION II

OF THE IMAGINATIVE FACULTY

CHAPTER I

OF THE THREE FORMS OF IMAGINATION

WE have hitherto been exclusively occupied with those sources of pleasure which exist in the external creation, and which in any faithful copy of it must to a certain extent exist also.

§ 1. A partial examination only of the Imagination is to be attempted.

These sources of beauty, however, are not presented by any very great work of art in a form of pure transcript. They invariably receive the reflection of the mind under whose shadow they have passed, and are modified or coloured by its image.

This modification is the Work of Imagination.

As, in the course of our succeeding investigation, we shall be called upon constantly to compare sources of beauty existing in nature with the images of them presented by the human mind, it is very necessary for us shortly to review the conditions and limits of the Imaginative faculty, and to ascertain by what tests we may distinguish its sane, healthy, and profitable operation, from that which is erratic, diseased, and dangerous.

It is neither desirable nor possible here to examine or illustrate in full the essence of this mighty faculty. Such an examination would require a review of the whole field of literature, and would alone demand a volume. Our present task is not to explain or exhibit full portraiture of this function of the mind in all its relations, but only to obtain some certain tests by which we may determine whether it be very Imagination or not, and unmask all impersonations of it, and this chiefly with respect to art, for in literature the faculty takes a thousand forms, according to the matter it has to treat, and becomes like the princess of the Arabian

tale, sword, eagle, or fire, according to the war it wages, sometimes piercing, sometimes soaring, sometimes illuminating, retaining no image of itself, except its supernatural power, so that I shall content myself with tracing that particular form of it, and unveiling those imitations of it only, which are to be found, or feared, in painting, referring to other creations of mind only for illustration.

§ 2. The works of the Metaphysicians how nugatory with respect to this faculty.

Unfortunately, the works of metaphysicians will afford us in this most interesting inquiry, no aid whatsoever. They who are constantly endeavouring to fathom and explain the essence of the faculties of mind, are sure in the end, to lose sight of all that cannot be explained, (though it may be defined and felt), and because, as I shall presently show, the essence of the Imaginative faculty is utterly mysterious and inexplicable, and to be recognized in its results only, or in the negative results of its absence, the metaphysicians, as far as I am acquainted with their works, miss it altogether, and never reach higher than a definition of Fancy by a false name.

What I understand by Fancy will presently appear, not that I contend for nomenclature, but only for distinction between two mental faculties, by whatever name they be called; one the source of all that is great in the poetic arts; the other merely decorative and entertaining, but which are often confounded together, and which have so much in common as to render strict definition of either difficult.

§ 3. The definition of D. Stewart, how inadequate.

Dugald Stewart's meagre definition may serve us for a starting point. "Imagination," he says, "includes conception or simple apprehension, which enables us to form a notion of those former objects of perception or of knowledge, out of which we are to make a selection; abstraction, which separates the selected materials from the qualities and circumstances which are connected with them in nature; and judgment or taste, which selects the materials and directs their combination. To these powers we may add that particular habit of association to which I formerly gave the name of Fancy, as it is this which presents to our choice all the different materials which are subservient to the efforts of imagination, and which may therefore be considered as forming the ground-work of poetical genius."

(By Fancy in this passage, we find on referring to the chapter treating of it, that nothing more is meant than the rapid occurrence of ideas of sense to the mind.)

Now, in this definition, the very point and purpose of all the inquiry is missed. We are told that judgment or taste "directs the combination." In order that anything may be directed, an end must be previously determined; What is the faculty that determines this end? and of what frame and make, how boned and fleshed, how conceived or seen, is the end itself? Bare judgment, or taste, cannot approve of what has no existence; and yet by Dugald Stewart's definition we are left to their catering among a host of conceptions, to produce a combination which, as they work for, they must see and approve before it exists. This power of prophecy is the very essence of the whole matter, and it is just that inexplicable part which the metaphysician misses.

§ 4. This instance nugatory.

As might be expected from his misunderstanding of the faculty, he has given an instance entirely nugatory.[1] It would be difficult to find in Milton a passage in which less power of imagination was shown, than the description of Eden, if, as I suppose, this be the passage meant, at the beginning of the fourth book, in which I can find three expressions only in which this power is shown, the "*burnished* with golden rind, hung amiable" of the Hesperian fruit, the "*lays forth* her purple grape" of the vine and the "*fringed* bank with myrtle crowned," of the lake, and these are not what Stewart meant: but only that accumulation of bowers, groves, lawns, and hillocks,

[1] He continues thus, "To illustrate these observations, let us consider the steps by which Milton must have proceeded, in creating his imaginary garden of Eden. When he first proposed to himself that subject of description, it is reasonable to suppose that a variety of the most striking scenes which he had seen, crowded into his mind. The association of ideas suggested them, and the power of conception placed each of them before him with all its beauties and imperfections. In every natural scene, if we destine it for any particular purpose, there are defects and redundancies, which art may sometimes, but cannot always correct. But the power of Imagination is unlimited. She can create and annihilate, and dispose at pleasure, her woods, her rocks, and her rivers. Milton, accordingly, would not copy his Eden from any one scene, but would select from each the features which were most eminently beautiful. The power of abstraction enabled him to make the separation, and taste directed him in the selection."

which is not imagination at all, but composition, and that of the commonest kind. Hence, if we take any passage in which there is real imagination, we shall find Stewart's hypothesis not only inefficient and obscure, but utterly inapplicable.

§ 5. Various instances.

Take one or two at random.

"On the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burned
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war."

(Note that the word incensed is to be taken in its literal and material sense, set on fire.) What taste or judgment was it that directed this combination? or is there nothing more than taste or judgment here?

"Ten paces huge
He back recoiled; the tenth on bended knee
His massy spear upstaid, as if on earth
Winds under ground, or waters forcing way
Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
Half-sunk with all his pines.

"Together both 'ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove a field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly winds her *sultry* horn.

"Missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heavens' wide pathless way
And oft *as if her head she bowed*
Stooping through a fleecy cloud."

It is evident that Stewart's explanation utterly fails in all these instances, for there is in them no "combination" whatsoever, but a particular mode of regarding the qualities or appearances of a single thing, illustrated and conveyed to us by the image of another; and the act of imagination, observe, is not the selection of this image, but the mode of regarding the object.

But the metaphysician's definition fails yet more utterly,

when we look at the imagination neither as regarding, nor combining, but as penetrating.

> "My gracious Silence, Hail!
> Wouldst thou have laughed, had I come coffin'd home
> That weep'st to see me triumph. Ah! my dear,
> Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,
> And mothers that lack sons."

How did Shakspeare *know* that Virgilia could not speak? This knowledge, this intuitive and penetrative perception, is still one of the forms, the highest, of imagination, but there is no combination of images here.

§ 6. The three operations of the Imagination. Penetrative, Associative, Contemplative.

We find, then, that the imagination has three totally distinct functions. It combines, and by combination creates new forms; but the secret principle of this combination has not been shown by the Analysts. Again, it treats, or regards, both the simple images and its own combinations in peculiar ways; and, thirdly, it penetrates, analyses, and reaches truths by no other faculty discoverable. These its three functions, I shall endeavour to illustrate, but not in this order: the most logical mode of treatment would be to follow the order in which commonly the mind works; that is, penetrating first, combining next, and treating or regarding, finally; but this arrangement would be inconvenient, because the acts of penetration and of regard are so closely connected, and so like in their relations to other mental acts, that I wish to examine them consecutively, and the rather, because they have to do with higher subject matter than the mere act of combination, whose distinctive nature, that property which makes it imagination and not composition, it will, I think, be best to explain at setting out, as we easily may, in subjects familiar and material. I shall therefore examine the imaginative faculty in these three forms; first, as combining or Associative; secondly, as Analytic or Penetrative; thirdly, as Regardant or Contemplative.

CHAPTER II

OF IMAGINATION ASSOCIATIVE

§ 1. Of simple conception.

In order to render our inquiry as easy as possible, we shall consider the dealing of the Associative imagination with the simplest possible matter, that is,—with conceptions of material things. First, therefore, we must define the nature of these conceptions themselves.

After beholding and examining any material object, our knowledge respecting it exists in two different forms. Some facts exist in the brain in a verbal form, as known, but not conceived, as, for instance, that it was heavy or light, that it was eight inches and a quarter long, &c., of which length we cannot have accurate conception, but only such a conception as might attach to a length of seven inches or nine; and which fact we may recollect without any conception of the object at all. Other facts respecting it exist in the brain in a visible form, not always visible, but voluntarily visible, as its being white, or having such and such a complicated shape: as the form of a rose-bud for instance, which it would be difficult to express verbally, neither is it retained by the brain in a verbal form, but a visible one, that is, when we wish for knowledge of its form for immediate use, we summon up a vision or image of the thing, we do not remember it in words, as we remember the fact that it took so many days to blow, or that it was gathered at such and such a time.

The knowledge of things retained in this visible form is called Conception by the Metaphysicians, which term I shall retain; it is inaccurately called Imagination by Taylor, in the passage quoted by Wordsworth in the preface to his poems, not but that the term Imagination is etymologically and rightly expressive of it, but we want that term for a higher faculty.

There are many questions respecting this faculty of conception of very great interest, such as the exact amount of aid that verbal knowledge renders so visible (as, for instance, the verbal knowledge that a flower has five,

or seven, or ten petals, or that a muscle is inserted at such and such a point of the bone, aids the conception of the flower or the limb); and again, what amount of aid the visible knowledge renders to the verbal, as for instance, whether any one, being asked a question about some animal or thing, which instantly and from verbal knowledge he cannot answer, may have such power of summoning up the image of the animal or thing as to ascertain the fact, by actual beholding (which I do not assert, but can conceive to be possible); and again, what is that indefinite and subtle character of the conception itself in most men, which admits not of being by themselves traced or realized, and yet is a sure test of likeness in any representation of the thing; like an intaglio, with a front light on it, whose lines cannot be seen, and yet they will fit one definite form only, and that accurately; these and many other questions it is irrelevant at present to determine[1], since to forward our present purpose, it will be well to suppose the conception, aided by verbal knowledge, to be absolutely perfect, and we will suppose a man to retain such clear image of a large number of the material things he has seen, as to be able to set down any of them on paper with perfect fidelity and absolute memory[2] of their most minute features.

§ 2. How connected with Verbal knowledge.

In thus setting them down on paper, he works, I suppose, exactly as he would work from nature, only copying the remembered image in his mind, instead of the real thing. He is, therefore, still nothing more than a copyist. There is no exercise of imagination in this whatsoever.

But over these images, vivid and distinct as nature herself, he has a command which over nature he has not. He can summon any that he chooses, and if, therefore, any group of them which he received from nature be not altogether to his mind, he is at liberty to remove some of the component images, add others foreign, and re-arrange the whole.

§ 3. How used in composition.

Let us suppose, for instance, that he has perfect knowledge of the forms of the Aiguilles Verte and Argentière, and of the great glacier between them at the upper extremity of the

[1] Compare Chapter IV. of this Section.

[2] On the distinction rightly made by the Metaphysicians between conception absolute, and conception accompanied by reference to past time (or memory), it is of no necessity here to insist.

valley of Chamonix. The forms of the mountains please him, but the presence of the glacier suits not his purpose. He removes the glacier, sets the mountains farther apart, and introduces between them part of the valley of the Rhone.

This is composition, and is what Dugald Stewart mistook for imagination, in the kingdom of which noble faculty it has no part nor lot.

§ 4. Characteristics of Composition.

The essential characters of Composition, properly so called, are these. The mind which desires the new feature summons up before it those images which it supposes to be of the kind wanted, of these it takes the one which it supposes to be fittest, and tries it: if it will not answer, it tries another, until it has obtained such an association as pleases it.

In this operation, if it be of little sensibility, it regards only the absolute beauty or value of the images brought before it; and takes that or those which it thinks fairest or most interesting, without any regard to their sympathy with those for whose company they are destined. Of this kind is all vulgar composition; the "Mulino" of Claude, described in the preface to the first part, being a characteristic example.

If the mind be of higher feeling, it will look to the sympathy or contrast of the features, to their likeness or dissimilarity; it will take, as it thinks best, features resembling or discordant, and if when it has put them together, it be not satisfied, it will repeat the process on the features themselves, cutting away one part and putting in another, so working more and more delicately down to the lowest details, until by dint of experiment, of repeated trials and shiftings, and constant reference to principles (as that two lines must not mimic one another, that one mass must not be equal to another), &c., it has morticed together a satisfactory result.

§ 5. What powers are implied by it. The First of the Three Functions of Fancy.

This process will be more and more rapid and effective, in proportion to the artist's powers of conception and association, these in their turn depending on his knowledge and experience. The distinctness of his powers of conception will give value, point, and truth to every fragment that he draws from memory. His powers of association, and his knowledge of nature will pour out before him in greater or less number and appositeness the images

from which to choose. His experience guides him to quick discernment in the combination, when made, of the parts that are offensive and require change.

The most elevated power of mind of all these, is that of association, by which images apposite or resemblant, or of whatever kind wanted, are called up quickly and in multitudes. When this power is very brilliant, it is called Fancy, not that this is the only meaning of the word Fancy, but it is the meaning of it in relation to that function of the imagination which we are here considering; for Fancy has three functions; one subordinate to each of the three functions of the imagination.

Great differences of power are manifested among artists in this respect, some having hosts of distinct images always at their command, and rapidly discerning resemblance or contrast; others having few images, and obscure, at their disposal, nor readily governing those they have.

Where the powers of fancy are very brilliant, the picture becomes highly interesting, if her images are systematically and rightly combined, and truthfully rendered, it will become even impressive and instructive; if wittily and curiously combined, it will be captivating and entertaining.

§ 6. Imagination not yet manifested.

But all this time the Imagination has not once shown itself. All this (except the gift of Fancy) may be taught, all this is easily comprehended and analysed; but Imagination is neither to be taught, nor by any efforts to be attained, nor by any acuteness of discernment dissected or analysed.

We have seen that in composition the mind can only take cognizance of likeness or dissimilarity, or of abstract beauty among the ideas it brings together. But neither likeness nor dissimilarity secures harmony. We saw in the chapter on Unity that likeness destroyed harmony or unity of Membership, and that difference did not necessarily secure it, but only that particular imperfection in each of the harmonizing parts which can only be supplied by its fellow part. If, therefore, the combination made is to be harmonious, the artist must induce in each of its component parts (suppose two only, for simplicity's sake), such imperfection as that the other shall put it right. If one of them be perfect by itself, the other will be an excrescence. Both must be faulty when separate, and each corrected by the

presence of the other. If he can accomplish this, the result will be beautiful; it will be a Whole, an organized Body with dependent members;—he is an Inventor. If not, let his separate features be as beautiful, as apposite, or as resemblant as they may, they form no whole. They are two members glued together. He is only a Carpenter and Joiner.

§ 7. Imagination associative is the co-relative conception of imperfect component parts.

Now, the conceivable imperfections of any single feature are infinite. It is impossible, therefore, to fix upon a form of imperfection in the one, and try with this all the forms of imperfection of the other until one fits; but the two imperfections must be co-relatively and simultaneously conceived.

This is imagination, properly so called, imagination associative, the grandest mechanical power that the Human intelligence possesses, and one which will appear more and more marvellous the longer we consider it. By its operation, two ideas are chosen out of an infinite mass (for it evidently matters not whether the imperfections be conceived out of the infinite number conceivable, or selected out of a number recollected) two ideas which are separately wrong, which together shall be right, and of whose unity, therefore, the idea must be formed at the instant they are seized, as it is only in that unity that either are good, and therefore only the *conception of that unity can prompt the preference.* Now, what is that prophetic action of mind, which out of an infinite mass of things that cannot be tried together, seizes, at the same instant two that are fit for each other, together right; yet each disagreeable alone.

This operation of mind, so far as I can see, is absolutely inexplicable, but there is something like it in Chemistry.

§ 8. Material analogy with Imagination.

"The action of sulphuric acid on metallic zinc affords an instance of what was once called Disposing Affinity. Zinc decomposes pure water at common temperatures with extreme slowness; but as soon as sulphuric acid is added, decomposition of the water takes place rapidly, though the acid merely unites with oxide of zinc. The former explanation was, that the affinity of the acid for oxide of zinc disposed the metal to unite with oxygen, and thus enabled it to decompose water; that is,

the oxide of zinc was supposed to produce an effect previous to its existence. The obscurity of this explanation arises from regarding changes as consecutive, which are in reality simultaneous. There is no succession in the process, the oxide of zinc is not formed previously to its combination with the acid, but at the same instant. There is, as it were, but one chemical change, which consists in the combination at one and the same moment of zinc with oxygen, and of oxide of zinc with the acid; and this change occurs because these two affinities, acting together, overcome the attraction of oxygen and hydrogen for one another." [1]

Now, if the imaginative artist will permit us, with all deference, to represent his combining intelligence under the figure of sulphuric acid; and if we suppose the fragment of zinc to be embarrassed among infinitely numerous fragments of diverse metals, and the oxygen dispersed and mingled among gases countless and indistinguishable, we shall have an excellent type in material things, of the action of the imagination on the immaterial. Both actions are, I think, inexplicable, for however simultaneous the chemical changes may be, yet the causing power is the affinity of the acid for what has no existence. It is neither to be explained how that affinity operates on atoms uncombined, nor how the artist's desire for an unconceived whole prompts him to the selection of necessary divisions.

§ 9. The grasp and dignity of Imagination.

Now, this operation would be wonderful enough, if it were concerned with two ideas only. But a powerfully imaginative mind seizes and combines at the same instant, not only two, but all the important ideas of its poem or picture, and while it works with any one of them, it is at the same instant working with and modifying all in their relations to it, never losing sight of their bearings on each other; as the motion of a snake's body goes through all parts at once, and its volition acts at the same instant in coils that go contrary ways.

This faculty is indeed something that looks as if man were made after the image of God. It is inconceivable,

[1] Elements of Chemistry, by the late Edward Turner, M.D., Part II. Sect. IV.

admirable, altogether divine; and yet wonderful as it may seem, it is palpably evident that no less an operation is necessary for the production of any great work, for, by the definition of Unity of Membership (the essential characteristic of greatness) not only certain couples or groups of parts, but *all* the parts of a noble work must be separately imperfect; each must imply, and ask for all the rest, and the glory of every one of them must consist in its relation to the rest, neither while so much as one is wanting can any be right. And it is evidently impossible to conceive in each separate feature, a certain want or wrongness which can only be corrected by the other features of the picture (not by one or two merely, but by all) unless together with the want, we conceive also of what is wanted, that is of all the rest of the work or picture. Hence Fuseli:—

"Second thoughts are admissible in painting and poetry only as dressers of the first conception; no great idea was ever formed in fragments."

"He alone can conceive and compose who sees the whole at once before him."

§ 10. Its limits.

There is, however, a limit to the power of all human imagination. When the relations to be observed are *absolutely* necessary, and highly complicated, the mind cannot grasp them, and the result is a total deprivation of all power of imagination associative in such matter. For this reason, no human mind has ever conceived a new animal. For as it is evident that in an animal, every part implies all the rest; that is, the form of the eye involves the form of the brow and nose, these the form of the forehead and lip, these of the head and chin, and so on, so that it is physically impossible to conceive of any one of these members, unless we conceive the relation it bears to the whole animal, and as this relation is necessary, certain, and complicated, allowing of no license or inaccuracy, the intellect utterly fails under the load, and is reduced to mere composition, putting the bird's wing on men's shoulders, or half the human body to half the horse's, in doing which there is no action of imagination, but only of fancy; though in the treatment and contemplation of the compound form there may be much imagination, as we shall presently see. (Chap. III. § 30.)

The matter, therefore, in which associative imagination can be shown is that which admits of great license and variety of arrangements, and in which a certain amount of relation only is required; as especially in the elements of landscape painting, in which best it may be illustrated.

§ 11. How manifested in treatment of uncertain relations. Its deficiency illustrated.

When an unimaginative painter is about to draw a tree, (and we will suppose him, for better illustration of the point in question, to have good feeling and correct knowledge of the nature of trees) he probably lays on his paper such a general form as he knows to be characteristic of the tree to be drawn, and such as he believes will fall in agreeably with the other masses of his picture, which we will suppose partly prepared. When this form is set down, he assuredly finds it has done something he did not intend it to do. It has mimicked some prominent line, or overpowered some necessary mass. He begins pruning and changing, and, after several experiments, succeeds in obtaining a form which does no material mischief to any other. To this form he proceeds to attach a trunk, and, having probably a received notion or rule (for the unimaginative painter never works without a principle) that tree trunks ought to lean first one way and then the other as they go up, and ought not to stand under the middle of the tree, he sketches a serpentine form of requisite propriety; when it has gone up far enough, that is, till it begins to look disagreeably long, he will begin to ramify it, and if there be another tree in the picture with two large branches, he knows that this, by all laws of composition, ought to have three or four, or some different number; and because he knows that if three or four branches start from the same point they will look formal, therefore he makes them start from points one above another, and because equal distances are improper, therefore they shall start at unequal distances. When they are fairly started, he knows they must undulate or go backwards and forwards, which accordingly he makes them do at random; and because he knows that all forms ought to be contrasted, he makes one bend down while the other three go up. The three that go up he knows must not go up without interfering with each other, and so he makes two of them cross. He thinks it also proper that there should be variety of character in them, so he makes the one that

bends down graceful and flexible, and of the two that cross, he splinters one and makes a stump of it. He repeats the process among the more complicated minor boughs, until coming to the smallest, he thinks farther care unnecessary, but draws them freely, and by chance. Having to put on the foliage, he will make it flow properly in the direction of the tree's growth, he will make all the extremities graceful, but will be grievously plagued by finding them come all alike, and at last will be obliged to spoil a number of them altogether, in order to obtain opposition. They will not, however, be united in this their spoliation, but will remain uncomfortably separate and individually ill tempered. He consoles himself by the reflection that it is unnatural for all of them to be equally perfect.

§ 12. Laws of art, the safeguard of the unimaginative,

Now, I suppose that through the whole of this process, he has been able to refer to his definite memory or conception of nature for every one of the fragments he has successively added, that the details, colour, fractures, insertions, &c., of his boughs, are all either actual recollections or based on secure knowledge of the tree (and herein I allow far more than is commonly the case with unimaginative painters). But as far as the process of combination is concerned, it is evident that from beginning to end his laws have been his safety, and his plague has been his liberty. He has been compelled to work at random, or under the guidance of feeling only, whenever there was anything left to his own decision. He has never been decided in anything except in what he *must* or *must not* do. He has walked as a drunken man on a broad road, his guides are the hedges; and between these limits, the broader the way, the worse he gets on.

§ 13. Are by the imaginative painter despised. Tests of imagination.

The advance of the Imaginative artist is precisely the reverse of this. He has no laws. He defies all restraint, and cuts down all hedges. There is nothing within the limits of natural possibility that he dares not do, or that he allows the necessity of doing. The laws of nature he knows, these are to him no restraint. They are his own nature. All other laws or limits he sets at utter defiance, his journey is over an untrodden and pathless plain. But he sees his end over the waste from the first,

and goes straight at it, never losing sight of it, nor throwing away a step. Nothing can stop him, nothing turn him aside; falcons and lynxes are of slow and uncertain sight compared with his. He saw his tree, trunk, boughs, foliage and all, from the first moment; not only the tree, but the sky behind it; not only that tree or sky, but all the other great features of his picture: by what intense power of instantaneous selection and amalgamation cannot be explained, but by this it may be proved and tested, that if we examine the tree of the unimaginative painter, we shall find that on removing any part or parts of it, the rest will indeed suffer, as being deprived of the proper development of a tree, and as involving a blank space that wants occupation; yet the portions left are not made discordant or disagreeable. They are absolutely and in themselves as valuable as they can be, every stem is a perfect stem, and every twig a graceful twig, or at least as perfect and as graceful as they were before the removal of the rest. But if we try the same experiment on the imaginative painter's work, and break off the merest stem or twig of it, it all goes to pieces like a Prince Rupert's drop. There is not so much as a seed of it but it lies on the tree's life, like the grain upon the tongue of Chaucer's sainted Child. Take it away, and the boughs will sing to us no longer. All is dead and cold.

This then is the first sign of the presence of real imagination as opposed to composition. But here is another not less important.

§ 14. The monotony of unimaginative treatment.

We have seen that as each part is selected and fitted by the unimaginative painter, he renders it, in itself, as beautiful as he is able. If it be ugly, it remains so, he is incapable of correcting it by the addition of another ugliness, and therefore he chooses all his features as fair as they may be (at least if his object be beauty). But a small proportion only of the ideas he has at his disposal will reach his standard of absolute beauty. The others will be of use to him, and among those which he permits himself to use, there will be so marked a family likeness, that he will be more and more cramped, as his picture advances, for want of material, and tormented by multiplying resemblances, unless disguised by some

artifice of light and shade or other forced difference, and with all the differences he can imagine, his tree will yet show a sameness and sickening repetition in all its parts, and all his trees will be like one another, except so far as one leans east and another west, one is broadest at the top and another at the bottom, while through all this insipid repetition, the means by which he forces contrast, dark boughs opposed to light, rugged to smooth, &c., will be painfully evident, to the utter destruction of all dignity and repose. The imaginative work is necessarily the absolute opposite of all this. As all its parts are imperfect, and as there is an unlimited supply of imperfection (for the ways of which things may be wrong are infinite), the imagination is never at a loss, nor ever likely to repeat itself; nothing comes amiss to it, but whatever rude matter it receives, it instantly so arranges that it comes right; all things fall into their place and appear in that place perfect, useful, and evidently not to be spared, so that of its combinations there is endless variety, and every intractable and seemingly unavailable fragment that we give to it, is instantly turned to some brilliant use, and made the nucleus of a new group of glory; however poor or common the gift, it will be thankful for it, treasure it up, and pay in gold, and it has that life in it and fire, that wherever it passes, among the dead bones and dust of things, behold a shaking, and the bones come together, bone to his bone.

§ 15. Imagination never repeats itself.

And now we find what noble sympathy and unity there is between the Imaginative and Theoretic faculties. Both agree in this, that they reject nothing, and are thankful for all; but the Theoretic faculty takes out of everything that which is beautiful, while the Imaginative faculty takes hold of the very imperfections which the Theoretic rejects, and by means of these angles and roughnesses, it joints and bolts the separate stones into a mighty temple, wherein the Theoretic faculty in its turn, does deepest homage. Thus sympathetic in their desires, harmoniously diverse in their operation, each working for the other with what the other needs not, all things external to man are by one or other turned to good.

§ 16. Relation of the Imaginative faculty to the Theoretic.

Now we have hitherto, for the sake of clearness,

opposed the total absence of imagination to the perfect presence of it, in order to make the difference between composition and imagination thoroughly understood. But if we are to give examples of either the want or the presence of the Power, it is necessary to note the circumstances by which both are modified. In the first place, few artists of any standing are totally devoid of this faculty, some small measure of it most of them possess, though of all the forms of intellect, this, and its sister, penetrative imagination, are the rarest and most precious; but few painters have reached eminence without some leaven of it, whether it can be increased by practice I doubt. On the other hand, fewer still are possessed of it in very high degree, and even with the men of most gigantic power in this respect, of whom, I think, Tintoret stands far the head, there are evident limits to its exercise, and portions to be found in their works that have not been included in the original grasp of them, but have been suggested and incorporated during their progress, or added in decoration; and, with the great mass of painters, there are frequent flaws and failures in the conception, so that, when they intend to produce a perfect work they throw their thought into different experimental forms, and decorate it and discipline it long before realizing it, so that there is a certain amount of mere composition in the most imaginative works; and a grain or two of imagination commonly in the most artificial. And again, whatever portions of a picture are taken honestly and without alteration from nature, have, so far as they go, the look of imagination, because all that nature does is imaginative, that is, perfect as a whole, and made up of imperfect features; so that the painter of the meanest imaginative power may yet do grand things, if he will keep to strict portraiture, and it would be well if all artists were to endeavour to do so, for if they have imagination, it will force its way in spite of them, and show itself in their every stroke, and if not, they will not get it by leaving nature, but only sink into nothingness.

§ 17. Modifications of its manifestation.

Keeping these points in view, it is interesting to observe the different degrees and relations of the imagination, as accompanied with more or less feeling or desire of harmony, vigour of conception, or constancy of reference to truth. Of men of name, perhaps Claude is the best instance

of a want of imagination, nearly total, borne out by painful but untaught study of nature, and much feeling for abstract beauty of form, with none whatever for harmony of expression. In Gaspar Poussin, we have the same want of imagination disguised by more masculine qualities of mind, and grander reachings after sympathy. Thus in the sacrifice of Isaac in our own gallery, the spirit of the composition is solemn and unbroken; it would have been a grand picture if the forms of the mass of foliage on the right, and of the clouds in the centre, had not been hopelessly unimaginative. The stormy wind of the picture of Dido and Eneas blows loudly through its leaves, but the total want of invention in the cloud forms bears it down beyond redemption. The foreground tree of the La Riccia (compare Part II. Sec. VI. Chap. I. § 6.) is another characteristic instance of absolute nullity of imagination.

§ 18. Instance of absence of Imagination.—Claude, Gaspar, Poussin.

In Salvator, the imagination is vigorous, the composition dexterous and clever, as in the St. Jerome of the Brera Gallery, the Diogenes of the Pitti, and the pictures of the Guadagni palace. All are rendered valueless by coarseness of feeling and habitual non-reference to nature.

§ 19. Its presence.—Salvator, Nicolo Poussin, Titian, Tintoret.

All the landscape of Nicolo Poussin is imaginative, but the development of the power in Tintoret and Titian is so unapproachably intense that the mind unwillingly rests elsewhere. The four landscapes which occur to me as the most magnificently characteristic are, first, the Flight into Egypt, of the Scuola di San Rocco (Tintoret); secondly, the Titian of the Camuccini collection at Rome, with the figures by John Bellini; thirdly, Titian's St. Jerome, in the Brera Gallery at Milan; and fourthly, the S. Pietro Martire, which I name last, in spite of its importance, because there is something unmeaning and unworthy of Titian about the undulation of the trunks, and the upper part of it is destroyed by the intrusion of some dramatic clouds of that species which I have enough described in our former examination of the Central Cloud Region, § 13.

I do not mean to set these four works above the rest of the landscape of these masters; I name them only because the landscape is in them prominent and characteristic. It

would be well to compare with them the other backgrounds of Tintoret in the Scuola, especially that of the Temptation and the Agony in the Garden, and the landscape of the two large pictures in the Church of La Madonna dell' Orto.

But for immediate and close illustration, it is perhaps best to refer to a work more accessible, the Cephalus and Procris of Turner in Liber Studiorum. I know of no landscape more purely or magnificently imaginative, or bearing more distinct evidence of the relative and simultaneous conception of the parts. Let the reader first cover with his hand the two trunks that rise against the sky on the right, and ask himself how any termination of the central mass so *ugly* as the straight trunk which he will then painfully see, could have been conceived or admitted without simultaneous conception of the trunks he has taken away on the right? Let him again conceal the whole central mass, and leave these two only, and again ask himself whether anything so ugly as that bare trunk in the shape of a Y, could have been admitted without reference to the central mass? Then let him remove from this trunk its two arms, and try the effect; let him again remove the single trunk on the extreme right; then let him try the third trunk without the excrescence at the bottom of it; finally, let him conceal the fourth trunk from the right, with the slender boughs at the top; he will find in each case that he has destroyed a feature on which everything else depends, and if proof be required of the vital power of still smaller features, let him remove the sunbeam that comes through beneath the faint mass of trees on the hill in the distance.[1]

§ 20. And Turner.

It is useless to enter into farther particulars; the reader may be left to his own close examination of this and of the other works of Turner, in which he will always find the associative imagination developed in the most profuse and marvellous modes, especially in the drawing of foliage and skies, in both of which the presence or absence of the associative power may best be tested in all artists. I have, however, confined my present illustrations chiefly to foliage, because other operations of the imagination besides

[1] This ray of light, however, has an imaginative power of another kind, presently to be spoken of. Compare Chap. IV. § 18.

the associative, interfere extensively in the treatment of sky.

There remains but one question to be determined relating to this faculty, what operation, namely, supposing it possessed in high degree, it has or ought to have in the artist's treatment of natural scenery.

§ 21. The due function of Associative imagination with respect to nature.

I have just said that nature is always imaginative, but it does not follow that her imagination is always of high subject, or that the imagination of all the parts is of a like and sympathetic kind; the boughs of every bramble bush are imaginatively arranged, so are those of every oak and cedar; but it does not follow that there is imaginative sympathy between bramble and cedar. There are few natural scenes whose harmonies are not conceivably improvable either by banishment of some discordant point, or by addition of some sympathetic one; it constantly happens that there is a profuseness too great to be comprehended, or an inequality in the pitch, meaning, and intensity of different parts. The imagination will banish all that is extraneous, it will seize out of the many threads of different feeling which nature has suffered to become entangled, one only; and where that seems thin and likely to break, it will spin it stouter, and in doing this, it never knots, but weaves in the new thread, so that all its work looks as pure and true as nature itself, and cannot be guessed from it but by its exceeding simplicity, (*known* from it, it cannot be), so that herein we find another test of the imaginative work, that it looks always as if it had been gathered straight from nature, whereas the unimaginative shows its joints and knots, and is visibly composition.

And here then we arrive at an important conclusion (though one somewhat contrary to the positions commonly held on the subject), namely, that if anything looks unnatural, there can be no imagination in it (at least not associative). We frequently hear works that have no truth in them, justified or elevated on the score of being imaginative. Let it be understood once for all, that imagination never deigns to touch anything but truth, and though it does not follow that where there is the appearance of truth, there has been imaginative operation, of this we may

§ 22. The sign of imaginative work is its appearance of absolute truth.

be assured, that where there is appearance of falsehood, the imagination has had no hand.[1]

For instance, the landscape above mentioned of Titian's St. Jerome may, for aught I know, be a pure transcript of a rocky slope covered with chestnuts among his native mountains. It has all the look of a sketch from nature; if it be not, the imagination developed in it is of the highest order; if it be, the imagination has only acted in the suggestion of the dark sky, of the shape of the flakes of solemn cloud, and of the gleam of russet light along the distant ground.[2]

Again, it is impossible to tell whether the two nearest trunks of the Æsacus and Hesperie of the Liber Studiorum, especially the large one on the right with the ivy, have been invented, or taken straight from nature, they have all the look of accurate portraiture. I can hardly imagine anything so perfect to have been obtained except from the real thing, but we know that the imagination must have begun to operate somewhere, we cannot tell where, since the multitudinous harmonies of the rest of the picture could hardly in any real scene have continued so inviolately sweet.

The final tests therefore, of the work of associative imagination are its intense simplicity, its perfect harmony, and its absolute truth. It may be a harmony, majestic, or humble, abrupt or prolonged, but it is always a governed and perfect whole, evidencing in all its relations the weight, prevalence, and universal dominion of an awful, inexplicable Power; a chastising, animating, and disposing Mind.

[1] Compare Chap. III. § 30.

[2] It is said at Venice that Titian took the trees of the S. Pietro Martire out of his garden opposite Murano. I think this unlikely; there is something about the lower trunks that has a taint of composition: the thought of the whole, however, is thoroughly fine. The backgrounds of the frescoes at Padua are also very characteristic, and the well-known wood-cut of St. Francis receiving the stigmata one of the mightiest of existing landscape thoughts; and yet it is pure portraiture of pine and Spanish Chestnut.

CHAPTER III

OF IMAGINATION PENETRATIVE

§ 1. Imagination penetrative is concerned not with the combining but the apprehending of things.

THUS far we have been defining that combining operation of the Imagination, which appears to be in a sort mechanical, yet takes place in the same inexplicable modes, whatever be the order of conception submitted to it, though I chose to illustrate it by its dealings with mere matter before taking cognizance of any nobler subjects of imagery. We must now examine the dealing of the Imagination with its separate conceptions, and endeavour to understand, not only its principles of selection, but its modes of apprehension with respect to what it selects.

§ 2. Milton's and Dante's description of flame.

When Milton's Satan first "rears from off the pool, his mighty stature," the image of leviathan before suggested not being yet abandoned, the effect on the fire-wave is described as of the upheaved monster on the ocean stream.

> "On each hand the flames,
> Driven backwards, slope their pointed spires, and, rolled
> In billows, leave in the midst a horrid vale."

And then follows a fiercely restless piece of volcanic imagery:

> "As when the force
> Of subterranean wind transports a hill,
> Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
> Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
> And fuell'd entrails thence conceiving fire,
> Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
> And leave a singëd bottom, all involved
> With stench and smoke; such resting found the sole
> Of unblest feet."

Yet I think all this is too far detailed, and deals too much with externals; we feel rather the form of the fire-waves than their fury, we walk upon them too securely, and the

fuel, sublimation, smoke, and singeing seem to me images only of partial combustion; they vary and extend the conception, but they lower the thermometer. Look back, if you will, and add to the description the glimmering of the livid flames; the sulphurous hail and red lightning; yet all together, however they overwhelm us with horror, fail of making us thoroughly, unendurably hot. The essence of intense flame has not been given. Now hear Dante—

> "Feriami 'l Sole in su l' omero destro
> Che già raggiando tutto l' Occidente
> *Mutava in bianco aspetto di cilestro.*
> *Ed io* facea *con l'ombra piu rovente*
> *Parer la fiamma.*"

That is a slight touch; he has not gone to Ætna or Pelorus for fuel; but we shall not soon recover from it—he has taken our breath away and leaves us gasping. No smoke nor cinders there. Pure, white, hurtling, formless flame; very fire crystal, we cannot make spires nor waves of it, nor divide it, nor walk on it, there is no question about singeing soles of feet. It is lambent annihilation.

§ 3. The Imagination seizes always by the innermost point.

Such is always the mode in which the highest imaginative faculty seizes its materials. It never stops at crusts or ashes, or outward images of any kind, it ploughs them all aside, and plunges into the very central fiery heart, nothing else will content its spirituality, whatever semblances and various outward shows and phases its subject may possess, go for nothing, it gets within all fence, cuts down to the root, and drinks the very vital sap of that it deals with: once there, it is at liberty to throw up what new shoots it will, so always that the true juice and sap be in them, and to prune and twist them at its pleasure, and bring them to fairer fruit than grew on the old tree; but all this pruning and twisting is work that it likes not, and often does ill; its function and gift are the getting at the root, its nature and dignity depend on its holding things always by the heart. Take its hand from off the beating of that, and it will prophecy no longer; it looks not in the eyes, it judges not by the voice, it describes not by outward features, all that it affirms, judges, or describes, it affirms from within.

It may seem to the reader that I am incorrect in calling this penetrating, possession-taking faculty, imagination. Be it so, the name is of little consequence; the Faculty itself, called by what name we will, I insist upon as the highest intellectual power of man. There is no reasoning in it, it works not by algebra, nor by integral calculus, it is a piercing, Pholas-like mind's tongue that works and tastes into the very rock heart, no matter what be the subject submitted to it, substance or spirit, all is alike, divided asunder, joint and marrow, whatever utmost truth, life, principle it has, laid bare, and that which has no truth, life, nor principle, dissipated into its original smoke at a touch. The whispers at men's ears it lifts into visible angels. Vials that have lain sealed in the deep sea a thousand years it unseals, and brings out of them Genii.

§ 4. It acts intuitively and without reasoning.

Every great conception of poet or painter is held and treated by this Faculty. Every character that is so much as touched by men like Æschylus, Homer, Dante, or Shakspeare, is by them held by the heart; and every circumstance or sentence of their being, speaking, or seeming, is seized by process from within, and is referred to that inner secret spring of which the hold is never lost for an instant; so that every sentence, as it has been thought out from the heart, opens for us a way down to the heart, leads us to the centre, and then leaves us to gather what more we may; it is the open Sesame of a huge, obscure, endless cave, with inexhaustible treasure of pure gold scattered in it: the wandering about and gathering the pieces may be left to any of us, all can accomplish that; but the first opening of that invisible door in the rock is of the Imagination only.

Hence there is in every word set down by the imaginative mind an awful under-current of meaning, and evidence and shadow upon it of the deep places out of which it has come. It is often obscure, often half told, for he who wrote it, in his clear seeing of the things beneath, may have been impatient of detailed interpretation, but if we choose to dwell upon it and trace it, it will lead us always securely back to that metropolis of the soul's dominion from which we may follow out all the ways and tracks to its farthest coasts.

§ 5. Signs of it in language.

I think the "Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante"

of Francesca di Rimini, and the "He has no children" of Macduff, are as fine instances as can be given, but the sign and mark of it are visible on every line of the four great men above instanced.

The unimaginative writer on the other hand, as he has never pierced to the heart, so he can never touch it; if he has to paint a passion, he remembers the external signs of it, he collects expressions of it from other writers, he searches for similes, he composes, exaggerates, heaps term on term, figure on figure, till we groan beneath the cold disjointed heap; but it is all faggot and no fire, the life breath is not in it, his passion has the form of the Leviathan, but it never makes the deep boil, he fastens us all at anchor in the scaly rind of it, our sympathies remain as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean.

§ 6. Absence of imagination, how shown.

And that virtue of originality that men so strain after, is not newness, as they vainly think (there is nothing new), it is only genuineness; it all depends on this single glorious faculty of getting to the Spring of things and working out from that, it is the coolness, and clearness, and deliciousness of the water fresh from the fountain head, opposed to the thick, hot, unrefreshing drainage from other men's meadows.

This freshness, however, is not to be taken for an infallible sign of imagination, inasmuch as it results also from a vivid operation of fancy, whose parallel function to this division of the imaginative faculty it is here necessary to distinguish.

§ 7. Distinction between Imagination and Fancy.

I believe it will be found that the entirely unimaginative mind *sees* nothing of the object it has to dwell upon or describe, and is therefore utterly unable, as it is blind itself, to set anything before the eyes of the reader.[1]

The fancy sees the outside, and is able to give a portrait of the outside, clear, brilliant, and full of detail.[2]

The imagination sees the heart and inner nature, and makes them felt, but is often obscure, mysterious, and interrupted, in its giving of outer detail.

[1] Compare Arist. Rhet. III. 11.

[2] For the distinction between fancy and simple conception, see Chap. IV. § 3.

Take an instance. A writer with neither imagination nor fancy, describing a fair lip, does not see it, but thinks about it, and about what is said of it, and calls it well turned, or rosy, or delicate, or lovely, or afflicts us with some other quenching and chilling epithet. Now hear fancy speak,—

> "Her lips were red, and one was thin,
> Compared with that was next her chin,
> Some bee had stung it newly."[1]

The real, red, bright being of the lip is there in a moment. But it is all outside; no expression yet, no mind. Let us go a step farther with Warner, of Fair Rosamond struck by Eleanor:

> "With that she dashed her on the lips
> So dyed double red;
> Hard was the heart that gave the blow,
> Soft were those lips that bled."

The tenderness of mind begins to mingle with the outside colour, the Imagination is seen in its awakening. Next Shelley,—

> "Lamp of life, thy lips are burning
> Through the veil that seems to hide them,
> As the radiant lines of morning
> Through thin clouds ere they divide them."

There dawns the entire soul in that morning; yet we may stop if we choose at the image still external, at the crimson clouds. The imagination is contemplative rather than penetrative. Last, hear Hamlet,—

"Here hung those lips that I have kissed, I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols, your songs, your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?"

There is the essence of lip, and the full power of the imagination.

[1] I take this and the next instance from Leigh Hunt's admirable piece of criticism, "Imagination and Fancy," which ought to be read with care, and to which, though somewhat loosely arranged, I may refer for all the filling up and illustration that the subject requires. With respect to what has just been said respecting want of imagination, compare his criticism of Addison's Cato, p. 28. I cannot, however, confirm his judgment, nor admit his selection of instances, among painters: he has looked to their manner only and habitual choice of subject, without feeling their power; and has given work to the coarseness, mindlessness, and eclecticism of Guido and the Caracci, which in its poetical demand of tenderness might have foiled Pinturicchio, of dignity, Leonardo, and of colour, Giorgione.

Again, compare Milton's flowers in Lycidas with Perdita's. In Milton it happens, I think, generally, and in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is part of iron and part of clay:

"Bring the rathe primrose, that forsaken dies (Imagination)
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine, (Nugatory)
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,— (Fancy)
The glowing violet, (Imagination)
The musk rose, and the well-attired woodbine, (Fancy, vulgar)
With cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head, (Imagination)
And every flower that sad embroidery wears." (Mixed)

Then hear Perdita:

"O, Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that, frighted thou let'st fall
From Dis's waggon. Daffodils
That come before the Swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty. Violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids."

Observe how the imagination in these last lines goes into the very inmost soul of every flower, after having touched them all at first with that heavenly timidness, the shadow of Proserpine's; and gilded them with celestial gathering, and never stops on their spots, or their bodily shape, while Milton sticks in the stains upon them, and puts us off with that unhappy freak of jet in the very flower that without this bit of paper-staining would have been the most precious to us of all. "There is pansies, that's for thoughts."

§ 8. Fancy, how involved with Imagination.

So I believe it will be found throughout the operation of the fancy, that it has to do with the outsides of things, and is content therewith: of this there can be no doubt in such passages as that description of Mab, so often given as an illustration of it, and many other instances will be found in Leigh Hunt's work already referred to. Only some embarrassment is caused by passages in which Fancy is seizing the outward signs of emotion, understanding them as such, and yet, in

pursuance of her proper function, taking for her share, and for that which she chooses to dwell upon, the outside sign rather than the emotion. Note in Macbeth that brilliant instance.

> "Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky
> And fan our people cold."

The outward shiver and coldness of fear is seized on, and irregularly but admirably attributed by the Fancy to the drift of the banners. Compare Solomon's song, where the imagination stays not at the outside, but dwells on the fearful emotion itself.

> "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning; fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

§ 9. Fancy is never serious.

Now, if these be the prevailing characteristics of the two faculties, it is evident that certain other collateral differences will result from it. Fancy, as she stays at the externals, can never feel. She is one of the hardest hearted of the intellectual faculties, or rather one of the most purely and simply intellectual. She cannot be made serious,[1] no edge-tools but she will play with; whereas the Imagination is in all things the reverse. She cannot be but serious; she sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly, ever to smile. There is something in the heart of everything, if we can reach it, that we shall not be inclined to laugh at. The *ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα* of the sea is on its surface, not in the deep.

And thus there is reciprocal action between the intensity of moral feeling and the power of imagination; for, on the one hand, those who have keenest sympathy are those who look closest and pierce deepest, and hold securest; and, on the other, those who have so pierced and seen the melancholy deeps of things, are filled with the most intense passion and gentleness of sympathy. Hence, I suppose that the powers of the imagination may always be tested by accompanying tenderness of emotion, and thus (as Byron said), there is no tenderness like Dante's, neither any intensity nor seriousness like his, such seriousness that it is incapable of perceiving that which is common-place or ridiculous, but

[1] Fancy, in her third function may, however, become serious, and gradually rise into imagination in doing so. Compare Chap. IV. § 5.

fuses all down into its own white-hot fire; and, on the other hand, I suppose the chief bar to the action of imagination, and stop to all greatness in this present age of ours, is its mean and shallow love of jest and jeer, so that if there be in any good and lofty work a flaw, or failing, or undipped vulnerable part where sarcasm may stick or stay, it is caught at, and pointed at, and buzzed about, and fixed upon, and stung into, as a recent wound is by flies, and nothing is ever taken seriously or as it was meant, but always, if it may be, turned the wrong way, and misunderstood; and while this is so, there is not, nor cannot be any hope of achievement of high things; men dare not open their hearts to us, if we are to broil them on a thorn-fire.

§ 10. Want of seriousness, the bar to high art at the present time.

This, then, is one essential difference between imagination and fancy, and another is like it and resultant from it, that the imagination being at the heart of things, poises herself there, and is still, quiet, and brooding; comprehending all around her with her fixed look, but the fancy staying at the outside of things, cannot see them all at once, but runs hither and thither, and round and about to see more and more, bounding merrily from point to point, and glittering here and there, but necessarily always settling, if she settle at all, on a point only, never embracing the whole. And from these single points she can strike out analogies and catch resemblances, which, so far as the point she looks at is concerned, are true, but would be false, if she could see through to the other side. This, however, she cares not to do, the point of contact is enough for her, and even if there be a gap left between the two things and they do not quite touch, she will spring from one to the other like an electric spark, and be seen brightest in her leaping.

§ 11. Imagination is quiet; Fancy, restless.

Now these differences between the imagination and the fancy hold, not only in the way they lay hold of separate conceptions, but even in the points they occupy of time, for the fancy loves to run hither and thither in time, and to follow long chains of circumstances from link to link; but the imagination, if it may, gets hold of a moment or link in the middle that implies all the rest, and fastens there. Hence

§ 12. The detailing operation of Fancy,

Fuseli's aphorism, "Invention never suffers the action to expire, nor the spectator's fancy to consume itself in preparation, or stagnate into repose. It neither begins from the egg, nor coldly gathers the remains."

In Retsch's illustrations to Schiller's Kampf mit dem Drachen, we have an instance, miserably feeble indeed, but characteristic, and suited to our present purpose, of the detailing, finishing action of the fancy. The dragon is drawn from head to tail, vulture eyes, serpent teeth, forked tongue, fiery crest, armour, claws, and coils as grisly as may be; his den is drawn, and all the dead bones in it, and all the savage forest-country about it far and wide; we have him, from the beginning of his career to the end, devouring, rampant, victorious over whole armies, gorged with death; we are present at all the preparations for his attack, see him receive his death-wound, and our anxieties are finally becalmed by seeing him lie peaceably dead on his back.

All the time we have never got into the dragon heart, we have never once felt real pervading horror, nor sense of the creature's being; it is throughout nothing but an ugly composition of claw and scale. Now take up Turner's Jason, Liber Studiorum, and observe how the Imagination can concentrate all this, and infinitely more, into one moment. No far forest country, no secret paths, nor cloven hills, nothing but a gleam of pale horizontal sky, that broods over pleasant places far away, and sends in, through the wild overgrowth of the thicket, a ray of broken daylight into the hopeless pit. No flaunting plumes nor brandished lances, but stern purpose in the turn of the crestless helmet, visible victory in the drawing back of the prepared right arm behind the steady point. No more claws, nor teeth, nor manes, nor stinging tails. We have the dragon, like everything else, by the middle. We need see no more of him. All his horror is in that fearful, slow, griding upheaval of the single coil. Spark after spark of it, ring after ring, is sliding into the light, the slow glitter steals along him step by step, broader and broader, a lighting of funeral lamps one by one, quicker and quicker; a moment more, and he is out upon us, all crash and blaze, among those broken trunks;—but he will be nothing then to what he is now.

§ 13. And suggestive, of the Imagination.

§ 14. This suggestiveness how opposed to vacancy.

Now, it is necessary here very carefully to distinguish between that character of the work which depends on the imagination of the beholder, and that which results from the imagination of the artist, for a work is often called imaginative when it merely leaves room for the action of the imagination; whereas though nearly all imaginative works do this, yet it may be done also by works that have in them no imagination at all. A few shapeless scratches or accidental stains on a wall; or the forms of clouds, or any other complicated accidents, will set the imagination to work to coin something out of them, and all paintings in which there is much gloom or mystery, possess therein a certain sublimity owing to the play given to the beholder's imagination, without, necessarily, being in the slightest degree imaginative themselves. The vacancy of a truly imaginative work results not from absence of ideas, or incapability of grasping and detailing them, but from the painter having told the whole pith and power of his subject and disdaining to tell more, and the sign of this being the case is, that the imagination of the beholder is forced to act in a certain mode, and feels itself overpowered and borne away by that of the painter, and not able to defend itself, nor go which way it will, and the value of the work depends on the truth, authority, and inevitability of this suggestiveness, and on the absolute right choice of the critical moment. Now observe in this work of Turner's, that the whole value of it depends on the character of curve assumed by the serpent's body; for had it been a mere semi-circle, or gone down in a series of smaller coils, it would have been in the first case, ridiculous, as false and unlike a serpent, or in the second, disgusting, nothing more than an exaggerated viper, but it is that *coming straight* at the right hand which suggests the drawing forth of an enormous weight, and gives the bent part its springing look, that frightens us. Again, remove the light trunk[1] on the left, and observe how useless all the gloom of the picture would have been, if this trunk had not given it depth and *hollowness*. Finally and chiefly, observe that the painter is not satisfied even with all the suggestiveness thus obtained, but to make sure of us, and force us,

[1] I am describing from a proof: in bad impressions this trunk is darkened.

whether we will or no, to walk his way, and not ours, the trunks of the trees on the right are all cloven into yawning and writhing heads and bodies, and alive with dragon energy all about us, note especially the nearest with its gaping jaws and claw-like branch at the seeming shoulder; a kind of suggestion which in itself is not imaginative, but merely fanciful (using the term fancy in that third sense not yet explained, corresponding to the third office of imagination); but it is imaginative in its present use and application, for the painter addresses thereby that morbid and fearful condition of mind which he has endeavoured to excite in the spectator, and which in reality would have seen in every trunk and bough, as it penetrated into the deeper thicket, the object of its terror.

§ 15. Imagination addresses itself to Imagination.

It is nevertheless evident, that however suggestive the work or picture may be, it cannot have effect unless we are ourselves both watchful of its very hint, and capable of understanding and carrying it out, and although I think that this power of continuing or accepting the direction of feeling given is less a peculiar gift, like that of the original seizing, than a faculty dependent on attention, and improvable by cultivation; yet, to a certain extent, the imaginative work will not, I think, be rightly esteemed except by a mind of some corresponding power; not but that there is an intense enjoyment in minds of feeble yet right conception in the help and food they get from those of stronger thought; but a certain imaginative susceptibility is at any rate necessary, and above all things, earnestness and feeling, so that assuredly a work of high conceptive dignity will be always incomprehensible and valueless except to those who go to it in earnest and give it time, and this is peculiarly the case when the imagination acts not merely on the immediate subject, nor in giving a fanciful and peculiar character to prominent objects, as we have just seen, but busies itself throughout in expressing occult and far-sought sympathies in every minor detail, of which action the most sublime instances are found in the works of Tintoret, whose intensity of imagination is such that there is not the commonest subject to which he will not attach a range of suggestiveness almost limitless, nor a stone, leaf,

Instances from the works of Tintoret.

or shadow, nor anything so small, but he will give it meaning and oracular voice.

§ 16. The Entombment.

In the centre of the gallery at Parma, there is a canvass of Tintoret's whose sublimity of conception and grandeur of colour are seen in the highest perfection, by their opposition to the morbid and vulgar sentimentalism of Correggio. It is an entombment of Christ, with a landscape distance, of whose technical composition and details I shall have much to say hereafter, at present I speak only of the thought it is intended to convey. An ordinary or unimaginative painter would have made prominent, among his objects of landscape, such as might naturally be supposed to have been visible from the sepulchre, and shown with the crosses of Calvary, some portion of Jerusalem or the Valley of Jehoshaphat. But Tintoret has a far higher aim. Dwelling on the peculiar force of the event before him, as the fulfilment of the final prophecy respecting the passion, "He made his grave with the wicked and with the *rich* in his death," he desires to direct the mind of the spectator to this receiving of the body of Christ, in its contrast with the houseless birth and the desert life. And, therefore, behind the ghastly tomb grass that shakes its black and withered blades above the rocks of the sepulchre, there is seen, not the actual material distance of the spot itself (though the crosses are shown faintly), but that to which the thoughtful spirit would return in vision, a desert place, where the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, and against the barred twilight of the melancholy sky are seen the mouldering beams and shattered roofing of a ruined cattle-shed, the canopy of the nativity.

§ 17. The Annunciation.

Let us take another instance. No subject has been more frequently or exquisitely treated by the religious painters than that of the Annunciation, though as usual, the most perfect type of its pure ideal has been given by Angelico, and by him with the most radiant consummation (so far as I know) in a small reliquary in the sacristy of St^a. Maria Novella. The back ground there, however, is altogether decorative; but in the fresco of the corridor of St. Mark's, the concomitant circumstances are of exceeding loveliness. The Virgin sits in an open loggia, resembling that of the Florentine church of

L'Annunziata. Before her is a meadow of rich herbage, covered with daisies. Behind her is seen through the door at the end of the loggia, her chamber with its single grated window, through which a star-light beam of light falls into the silence. All is exquisite in feeling, but not inventive nor imaginative. Severe would be the shock and painful the contrast, if we could pass in an instant from that pure vision to the wild thought of Tintoret. For not in meek reception of the adoring messenger, but startled by the rush of his horizontal and rattling wings, the virgin sits, not in the quiet loggia, not by the green pasture of the restored soul, but houseless, under the shelter of a palace vestibule ruined and abandoned, with the noise of the axe and the hammer in her ears, and the tumult of a city round about her desolation. The spectator turns away at first, revolted, from the central object of the picture, forced painfully and coarsely forward, a mass of shattered brickwork, with the plaster mildewed away from it, and the mortar mouldering from its seams; and if he look again, either at this or at the carpenter's tools beneath it, will perhaps see, in the one and the other, nothing more than such a study of scene as Tintoret could but too easily obtain among the ruins of his own Venice, chosen to give a coarse explanation of the calling and the condition of the Husband of Mary. But there is more meant than this. When he looks at the composition of the picture, he will find the whole symmetry of it depending on a narrow line of light, the edge of a carpenter's square, which connects these unused tools with an object at the top of the brickwork, a white stone, four square, the corner-stone of the old edifice, the base of its supporting column. This, I think, sufficiently explains the typical character of the whole. The ruined house is the Jewish dispensation; that obscurely arising in the dawning of the sky is the Christian; but the corner-stone of the old building remains, though the builder's tools lie idle beside it, and the stone which the builders refused is become the Headstone of the Corner.

In this picture, however, the force of the thought hardly atones for the painfulness of the scene and the turbulence of its feeling. The power of the master is more strikingly shown in his treatment of a subject which, how-

ever important, and however deep in its meaning, supplies not to the ordinary painter material enough ever to form a picture of high interest; the Baptism of Christ. From the purity of Giotto to the intolerable, inconceivable brutality of Salvator [1], every order of feeling has been displayed in its treatment; but I am aware of no single case, except this of which I am about to speak, in which it has formed an impressive picture.

§ 18. The Baptism of Christ. Its treatment by various painters.

Giotto's, in the Academy of Florence, engraved in the series just published (Galleria delle belle Arti), is one of the most touching I know, especially in the reverent action of the attendant angels, and Leonardo's angel in that of Andrea del Verrocchio is very beautiful, but the event is one whose character and importance are ineffable upon the features: the descending dove hardly affects us, because its constant symbolical occurrence hardens us, and makes us look on it as a mere type or letter instead of the actual presence of the Spirit; and by all the sacred painters the power that might be put into the landscape is lost, for though their use of foliage and distant sky or mountain is usually very admirable, as we shall see in the fifth chapter, yet they cannot deal with near water or rock, and the hexagonal and basaltic protuberances of their river shore are I think too painful to be endured even by the most acceptant mind, as eminently in that of Angelico, in the Vita di Christo, which, as far as I can judge, is a total failure in action, expression, and all else; and in general it is in this subject especially, that the greatest painters show their weakness. For this reason, I suppose, and feeling the difficulty of it, Tintoret has thrown into it his utmost strength, and it becomes noble in his hands by his most singularly imaginative expression, not only of the immediate

1 The picture is in the Guadagni Palace. It is one of the most important landscapes Salvator ever painted. The figures are studied from street beggars. On the other side of the river, exactly opposite the point where the Baptism of Christ takes place, the painter, with a refinement of feeling peculiarly his own, has introduced some ruffians stripping off their shirts to bathe. He is fond of this incident. It occurs again in one of the marines of the Pitti palace, with the additional interest of a foreshortened figure, swimming on its back, feet foremost, exactly in the stream of light to which the eye is principally directed.

fact, but of the whole train of thought of which it is suggestive; and by his considering the Baptism not only as the submission of Christ to the fulfilment of all righteousness, but as the opening of the earthly struggle with the prince of the powers of the air, which instantly beginning in the temptation, ended only on the cross.

§ 19. By Tintoret.

The river flows fiercely under the shadow of a great rock. From its opposite shore, thickets of close gloomy foliage rise against the rolling chasm of heaven through which breaks the brightness of the descending Spirit. Across these, dividing them asunder, is stretched a horizontal floor of flaky cloud, on which stand the hosts of heaven. Christ kneels upon the water, and does not sink; the figure of St. John is indistinct, but close beside his raised right arm there is a spectre in the black shade, the Fiend, harpy shaped, hardly seen, glares down upon Christ with eyes of fire, waiting his time. Beneath this figure there comes out of the mist a dark hand, the arm unseen, extended to a net in the river, the spars of which are in the shape of a cross. Behind this the roots and under stems of the trees are cut away by the cloud, and beneath it, and through them, is seen a vision of wild, melancholy, boundless light, the sweep of the desert, and the figure of Christ is seen therein alone, with his arms lifted as in supplication or ecstasy, borne of the Spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.

There are many circumstances which combine to give to this noble work a more than usually imaginative character. The symbolical use of the net, which is the cross net still used constantly in the canals of Venice, and common throughout Italy, is of the same character as that of the carpenter's tools in the Annunciation; but the introduction of the spectral figure is of bolder reach, and yet more, that vision of the after temptation which is expressly indicated as a subject of thought rather than of sight, because it is in a part of the scene which in *fact* must have been occupied by the trunks of the trees whose tops are seen above; and another circumstance completes the mystic character of the whole, that the flaky clouds which support the angelic hosts take on the right, where the light first falls upon them, the shape of the Head of a Fish, the well-known type both of the baptismal sacrament and of Christ.

But the most exquisite instance of this imaginative power occurs in an incident in the background of the Crucifixion. I will not insult this marvellous picture by an effort at a verbal account of it. I would not white-wash it with praise, and I refer to it only for the sake of two thoughts peculiarly illustrative of the intellectual faculty immediately under discussion. In the common and most Catholic treatment of the subject, the mind is either painfully directed to the bodily agony, coarsely expressed by outward anatomical signs, or else it is permitted to rest on that countenance inconceivable by man at any time, but chiefly so in this its consummated humiliation. In the first case, the representation is revolting; in the second, inefficient, false, and sometimes blasphemous. None even of the greatest religious painters have ever, so far as I know, succeeded here; Giotto and Angelico were cramped by the traditional treatment, and the latter especially, as before observed, is but too apt to indulge in those points of vitiated feeling which attained their worst development among the Byzantines; Perugino fails in his Christ in almost every instance (of other men than these after them we need not speak). But Tintoret here, as in all other cases, penetrating into the root and deep places of his subject, despising all outward and bodily appearances of pain, and seeking for some means of expressing, not the rack of nerve or sinew, but the fainting of the deserted Son of God before his Eloi cry, and yet feeling himself utterly unequal to the expression of this by the countenance, has on the one hand filled his picture with such various and impetuous muscular exertion that the body of the Crucified is, by comparison, in perfect repose, and on the other has cast the countenance altogether into shade. But the Agony is told by this, and by this only; that though there yet remains a chasm of light on the mountain horizon where the earthquake darkness closes upon the day, the broad and sunlike glory about the Head of the Redeemer has become wan, and of the colour of ashes.[1]

§ 20. The Crucifixion.

But the great painter felt he had something more to do

[1] This circumstance, like most that lie not at the surface, has escaped Fuseli, though his remarks on the general tone of the picture are very good, as well as his opposition of it to the treatment of Rubens. (Lecture IX.)

yet. Not only that Agony of the Crucified, but the tumult of the people, that rage which invoked his blood upon them and their children. Not only the brutality of the soldier, the apathy of the Centurion, nor any other merely instrumental cause of the Divine suffering, but the fury of his own people, the noise against him of those for whom he died, were to be set before the eye of the understanding, if the power of the picture was to be complete. This rage, be it remembered, was one of disappointed pride; and the disappointment dated essentially from the time, when but five days before, the King of Zion came, and was received with hosannahs, riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. To this time, then, it was necessary to direct the thoughts, for therein are found both the cause and the character, the excitement of, and the witness against, this madness of the People. In the shadow behind the cross, a man, riding on an Ass colt, looks back to the multitude, while he points with a rod to the Christ crucified. The Ass is feeding on the *remnants* of *withered Palm-leaves*.

With this master-stroke I believe I may terminate all illustration of the peculiar power of the imagination over the feelings of the spectator, by the elevation into dignity and meaning of the smallest accessory circumstances. But I have not yet sufficiently dwelt on the fact from which this power arises, the absolute truth of statement of the central fact as it was, or must have been. Without this truth, this awful first moving principle, all direction of the feelings is useless. That which we cannot excite, it is of no use to know how to govern.

§ 21. The Massacre of Innocents.

I have before alluded, Sec. I. Chap. XIV., to the painfulness of Raphael's treatment of the massacre of the innocents. Fuseli affirms of it that, "in dramatic gradation he disclosed all the mother through every image of pity and of terror." If this be so, I think the philosophical spirit has prevailed over the imaginative. The imagination never errs, it sees all that is, and all the relations and bearings of it, but it would not have confused the mortal frenzy of maternal terror with various development of maternal character. Fear, rage, and agony, at their utmost pitch, sweep away all character: humanity itself would be lost in maternity, the woman would become the mere personification of animal fury or fear. For

this reason all the ordinary representations of this subject are, I think, false and cold: the artist has not heard the shrieks, nor mingled with the fugitives, he has sat down in his study to twist features methodically, and philosophize over insanity. Not so Tintoret. Knowing, or feeling, that the expression of the human face was in such circumstances not to be rendered, and that the effort could only end in an ugly falsehood, he denies himself all aid from the features, he feels that if he is to place himself or us in the midst of that maddened multitude, there can be no time allowed for watching expression. Still less does he depend on details of murder or ghastliness of death; there is no blood, no stabbing or cutting, but there is an awful substitute for these in the chiaroscuro. The scene is the outer vestibule of a palace, the slippery marble floor is fearfully barred across by sanguine shadows, so that our eyes seem to become blood-shot and strained with strange horror and deadly vision; a lake of life before them, like the burning seen of the doomed Moabite on the water that came by the way of Edom: a huge flight of stairs, without parapet, descends on the left; down this rush a crowd of women mixed with the murderers; the child in the arms of one has been seized by the limbs, she hurls herself over the edge, and falls head downmost, dragging the child out of the grasp by her weight;—she will be dashed dead in a second: two others are farther in flight, they reach the edge of a deep river,—the water is beat into a hollow by the force of their plunge;—close to us is the great struggle, a heap of the mothers entangled in one mortal writhe with each other and the swords, one of the murderers dashed down and crushed beneath them, the sword of another caught by the blade and dragged at by a woman's naked hand; the youngest and fairest of the women, her child just torn away from a death grasp and clasped to her breast with the grip of a steel vice, falls backwards helplessly over the heap, right on the sword points; all knit together and hurled down in one hopeless, frenzied, furious abandonment of body and soul in the effort to save. Their shrieks ring in our ears till the marble seems rending around us, but far back, at the bottom of the stairs, there is something in the shadow like a heap of clothes. It is a woman, sitting quiet,—quite quiet—still as any stone, she looks down steadfastly on her dead

child, laid along on the floor before her, and her hand is pressed softly upon her brow.

§ 22. Various works in the Scuola di San Rocco.

This, to my mind, is the only Imaginative; that is, the only true, real, heartfelt representation of the being and actuality of the subject, in existence.[1] I should exhaust the patience of the reader if I were to dwell at length on the various stupendous developments of the imagination of Tintoret in the Scuola di San Rocco alone. I would fain join a while in that solemn pause of the journey into Egypt, where the silver boughs of the shadowy trees lace with their tremulous lines the alternate folds of fair cloud, flushed by faint crimson light, and lie across the streams of blue between those rosy islands, like the white wakes of wandering ships; or watch beside the sleep of the disciples among those massy leaves that lie so heavily on the dead of the night beneath the descent of the angel of the agony, and toss fearfully above the motion of the torches as the troop of the betrayer emerges out of the hollows of the olives; or wait through the hour of accusing beside the judgment seat of Pilate, where all is unseen, unfelt, except the one figure that stands with its head bowed down, pale, like a pillar of moonlight, half bathed in the Glory of the Godhead, half wrapt in the whiteness of the shroud. Of these and all the other thoughts of indescribable power that are now fading from the walls of those neglected chambers, I may perhaps endeavour at a future time to preserve some image and shadow more faithfully than by words; but I shall at present terminate our series of illustrations by reference to a work of less touching, but more tremendous appeal, the Last Judgment in the Church of Santa Maria dell' Orto. In this subject, almost all realizing or local statement had been carefully avoided by the most powerful painters, they judging it better to represent its chief circumstances as generic thoughts, and present them to the mind in a typical or abstract form. In the judgment of Angelico the treatment is purely typical, a long Campo santo, composed of two lines of graves, stretches away into the distance; on the left side of it rise the condemned; on

§ 23. The Last Judgment. How treated by various painters.

[1] Note the shallow and uncomprehending notice of this picture by Fuseli. His description of the treatment of it by other painters is however true, terse, and valuable.

the right the just. With Giotto and Orcagna, the conception, though less rigid, is equally typical, no effort being made at the suggestion of space, and only so much ground represented as is absolutely necessary to support the near figures and allow space for a few graves. Michael Angelo in no respect differs in his treatment, except that his figures are less symmetrically grouped, and a greater conception of space is given by their various perspective. No interest is attached to his background in itself. Fra Bartolomeo, never able to grapple with any species of sublimity except that of simple religious feeling, fails most signally in this mighty theme.[1] His group of the dead, including not more than ten or twelve figures, occupies the foreground only, behind them a vacant plain extends to the foot of a cindery volcano, about whose mouth several little black devils like spiders are skipping and crawling. The judgment of quick and dead is thus expressed as taking place in about a rood square, and on a dozen of people at a time, the whole of the space and horizon of the sky and land being left vacant, and the the presence of the Judge of all the earth made more finite than the sweep of a whirlwind or a thunder-storm.

§ 24. By Tintoret.

By Tintoret only has this unimaginable event been grappled with in its Verity; not typically nor symbolically, but as they may see it who shall not sleep, but be changed. Only one traditional circumstance he has received with Dante and Michael Angelo, the Boat of the Condemned, but the impetuosity of his mind bursts out even in the adoption of this image, he has not stopped at the scowling ferryman of the one, nor at the sweeping blow and demon dragging of the other, but, seized Hylas-like by the limbs, and tearing up the earth in his agony, the victim is dashed into his destruction; nor is it the sluggish Lethe, nor the fiery lake that bears the cursed vessel, but the oceans of the earth and the waters of the firmament gathered into one white, ghastly cataract, the river of the wrath of God, roaring down into the gulph where the world has melted with its fervent heat, choked with the ruin of nations, and the limbs of its corpses tossed out of its whirling, like water-wheels. Bat like, out of the holes and caverns and shadows of the earth, the bones gather, and the clay heaps

[1] Fresco in an outhouse of the Ospedale Stª. Maria Nuova at Florence.

heave, rattling and adhering into half kneaded anatomies, that crawl, and startle, and struggle up among the putrid weeds, with the clay clinging to their clotted hair, and their heavy eyes sealed by the earth darkness yet, like his of old who went his way unseeing to the Siloam Pool; shaking off one by one the dreams of the prison-house, hardly hearing the clangour of the trumpets of the armies of God, blinded yet more, as they awake, by the white light of the new Heaven, until the great vortex of the four winds bears up their bodies to the judgment seat: the Firmament is all full of them, a very dust of human souls, that drifts, and floats, and falls in the interminable, inevitable light, the bright clouds are darkened with them as with thick snow, currents of atom life in the arteries of heaven, now soaring up slowly, farther, and higher and higher still, till the eye and the thought can follow no farther, borne up, wingless, by their inward faith and by the angel powers invisible, now hurled in countless drifts of horror before the breath of their condemnation.

§ 25. The imaginative verity, how distinguished from realism.

Now, I wish the reader particularly to observe throughout all these works of Tintoret, the distinction of the Imaginative Verity from falsehood on the one hand, and from Realism on the other. The power of every picture depends on the penetration of the imagination into the TRUE nature of the thing represented, and on the utter scorn of the imagination for all shackles and fetters of mere external fact that stand in the way of its suggestiveness. In the Baptism it cuts away the trunks of trees as if they were so much cloud or vapour, that it may exhibit to the thought the completed sequency of the scene [1]; in the Massacre, it covers the marble floor with visionary light, that it may strike terror into the spectator without condescending to butchery; it defies the bare fact, but creates in him the fearful feeling; in the Crucifixion it annihilates locality, and brings the palm leaves to Calvary, so only that it may bear the mind to the mount of Olives, as in the entombment it brings the manger to Jerusalem, that it may take the heart to Bethlehem; and all this it does in the daring consciousness of its higher and spiritual verity, and in the entire knowledge of the fact and

[1] The same thing is done yet more boldly in the large composition of the ceiling; the plague of fiery serpents; a part of the host, and another sky horizon are seen through an opening in the ground.

substance of all that it touches. The imaginary boat of the demon angel expands the rush of the visible river into the descent of irresistible condemnation; but to make that rush and roar felt by the eye and heard by the ear, the rending of the pine branches above the cataract is taken directly from Nature; it is an abstract of Alpine Storm. Hence while we are always placed face to face with whatever is to be told, there is in and beyond its reality a voice supernatural; and that which is doubtful in the vision has strength, sinew, and assuredness, built up in it by fact.

§ 26. The Imagination how manifested in sculpture.

Let us, however, still advance one step farther, and observe the imaginative power deprived of all aid from chiaroscuro, colour, or any other means of concealing the frame-work of its thoughts.

It was said by Michael Angelo that "non ha l' ottimo scultore alcun concetto, Ch' un marmo solo in se non circoscriva," a sentence which, though in the immediate sense intended by the writer it may remind us a little of the indignation of Boileau's Pluto, "Il s'ensuit de la que tout ce qui se peut dire de beau, est dans les dictionnaires,—il n'y a que les paroles qui sont transposées," yet is valuable, because it shows us that Michael Angelo held the imagination to be entirely expressible in rock, and therefore altogether independent, in its own nature, of those aids of colour and shade by which it is recommended in Tintoret, though the sphere of its operation is of course by these incalculably extended. But the presence of the imagination may be rendered in marble as deep, thrilling, and awful as in painting, so that the sculptor seek for the soul and govern the body thereby.

§ 27. Bandinelli, Canova, Mino da Fiesole.

Of unimaginative work, Bandinelli and Canova supply us with characteristic instances of every kind, the Hercules and Cacus of the former, and its criticism by Cellini, will occur at once to every one; the disgusting statue now placed so as to conceal Giotto's important tempera picture in Santa Croce is a better instance, but a still more impressive lesson might be received by comparing the inanity of Canova's garland grace, and ball-room sentiment with the intense truth, tenderness, and power of men like Mino da Fiesole, whose chisel leaves many a hard edge, and despises down and dimple, but it seems to cut light and carve breath, the

marble burns beneath it, and becomes transparent with very spirit. Yet Mino stopped at the human nature; he saw the soul, but not the ghostly presences about it; it was reserved for Michael Angelo to pierce deeper yet, and to see the indwelling angels. No man's soul is alone, Laocoon or Tobit, the serpent has it by the heart or the angel by the hand, the light or the fear of the Spiritual things that move beside it may be seen on the body; and that bodily form with Buonaroti, white, solid, distinct, material, though it be, is invariably felt as the instrument or the habitation of some infinite, invisible power. The Earth of the Sistine Adam that begins to burn; the woman embodied burst of Adoration from his sleep; the twelve great torrents of the Spirit of God that pause above us there, urned in their vessels of clay; the waiting in the shadow of Futurity of those through whom the Promise and Presence of God went down from the Eve to the Mary, each still and fixed, fixed in his expectation, silent, foreseeing, faithful, seated each on his stony throne, the building stones of the word of God, building on and on, tier by tier, to the Refused one, the head of the corner; not only these, not only the troops of terror torn up from the earth by the four quartered winds of the Judgment, but every fragment and atom of stone that he ever touched became instantly inhabited by what makes the hair stand up and the words be few: the St. Matthew, not yet disengaged from his sepulchre, bound hand and foot by his grave clothes, it is left for us to loose him; the strange spectral wreath of the Florence Pieta, casting its pyramidal, distorted shadow, full of pain and death, among the faint purple lights that cross and perish under the obscure dome of St[a]. Maria del Fiore, the white lassitude of joyous limbs, panther like, yet passive, fainting with their own delight, that gleam among the Pagan Formalisms of the Uffizzii, far away, showing themselves in their lustrous lightness as the waves of an Alpine torrent do by their dancing among the dead stones, though the stones be as white as they[1]: and finally, and perhaps more than all, those four ineffable types, not of darkness nor of day—not of morning nor evening, but of the departure and the resurrection, the twilight and the dawn of the souls of men

§ 28. Michael Angelo.

[1] The Bacchus. There is a small statue opposite it also—unfinished; but "a spirit still."

—together with the spectre sitting in the shadow of the niche above them[1]; all these, and all else that I could name of his forming, have borne, and in themselves retain and exercise the same inexplicable power—inexplicable because proceeding from an imaginative perception almost superhuman, which goes whither we cannot follow, and is where we cannot come; throwing naked the final, deepest root of the being of man, whereby he grows out of the invisible, and holds on his God home.[2]

[1] I would have insisted more on the ghostly vitality of this dreadful statue; but the passage referring to it in Rogers's Italy supersedes all further description. I suppose most lovers of art know it by heart.

> "Nor then forget that chamber of the dead,
> Where the gigantic shapes of Night and Day,
> Turned into stone, rest everlastingly;
> Yet still are breathing, and shed round at noon
> A twofold influence,—only to be felt—
> A light, a darkness, mingling each with each;
> Both, and yet neither. There, from age to age,
> Two ghosts are sitting on their sepulchres.
> That is the Duke Lorenzo. Mark him well.
> He meditates, his head upon his hand.
> What from beneath his helm-like bonnet scowls?
> Is it a face, or but an eyeless skull?
> 'Tis lost in shade; yet, like the basilisk,
> It fascinates, and is intolerable.
> His mien is noble, most majestical!
> Then most so, when the distant choir is heard
> At morn or eve—nor fail thou to attend
> On that thrice-hallowed day, when all are there;
> When all, propitiating with solemn songs,
> Visit the Dead. Then wilt thou feel his power!"

It is strange that this should be the only written instance (as far as I recollect) of just and entire appreciation of Michael Angelo's spiritual power. It is perhaps owing to the very intensity of his imagination that he has been so little understood—for, as I before said, imagination can never be met by vanity, nor without earnestness. His Florentine followers saw in him an anatomist and posture-master—and art was finally destroyed by the influence over admiring idiotcy of the greatest mind that art ever inspired.

[2] I have not chosen to interrupt the argument respecting the essence of the imaginative faculty by any remarks on the execution of the imaginative hand; but we can hardly leave Tintoret and Michael Angelo without some notice of the pre-eminent power of execution exhibited by both of them, in consequence of their vigour and clearness of conception; nor without again warning the lower artist from confounding this velocity of decision and impatience with the velocity of affectation or indolence. Every result of real imagination we have seen to be a truth of some sort; and it is the characteristic of truth to be in

Now, in all these instances, let it be observed, for it is to that end alone that I have been arguing all along, that the virtue of the Imagination is its reaching, by intuition and intensity of gaze (not by reasoning, but by its authoritative opening and revealing power), a more essential truth than is seen at the surface of things. I repeat that it matters not whether the reader is willing to call this faculty Imagination or no, I do not care about the name; but I would be understood when I speak of imagination hereafter, to mean this,

§ 29. Recapitulation. The perfect function of the Imagination is the intuitive perception of Ultimate Truth.

some way tangible, seizable, distinguishable, and clear, as it is of falsehood to be obscure, confused, and confusing. Not but that many, if not most truths have a dark side, a side by which they are connected with mysteries too high for us,—nay, I think it is commonly but a poor and miserable truth which the human mind can walk all round, but at all events they have one side by which we can lay hold of them, and feel that they are downright adamant, and that their form, though lost in cloud here and there, is unalterable and real, and not less real and rocky because infinite, and joined on, St. Michael's mount-like, to a far mainland. So then, whatever the real imagination lays hold of, as it is a truth, does not alter into anything else, as the imaginative part works at it, and feels over it, and finds out more of it, but comes out more and more continually, all that is found out pointing to and indicating still more behind, and giving additional stability and reality to that which is discovered already. But if it be fancy or any other form of pseudo-imagination which is at work, then that which it gets hold of may not be a truth, but only an idea, which will keep giving way as soon as we try to take hold of it and turning into something else, so that as we go on copying it, every part will be inconsistent with all that has gone before, and at intervals it will vanish altogether and leave blanks which must be filled up by any means at hand. And in these circumstances, the painter, unable to seize his thought, because it has not substance nor bone enough to bear grasping, is liable to catch at every line that he lays down, for help and suggestion, and to be led away by it to something else, which the first effort to realize dissipates in like manner, placing another phantom in its stead, until out of the fragments of these successive phantoms he has glued together a vague, mindless, involuntary whole, a mixture of all that was trite or common in each of the successive conceptions, for that is necessarily what is first caught, a heap of things with the bloom off and the chill on, laborious, unnatural, inane, with its emptiness disguised by affectation, and its tastelessness salted by extravagance.

Necessarily, from these modes of conception, three vices of execution must result; and these are necessarily found in all those parts of the work where any trust has been put in conception, and only to be avoided in portions of actual portraiture, (for a thoroughly unimaginative painter can make no use of a study—all his studies are guesses and experiments, all are

the true foundation of all art which exercises eternal authority over men's minds; (all other imagination than this is either secondary and contemplative, or utterly spurious;) the base of whose authority and being is its perpetual thirst for truth and purpose to be true. It has no food, no

equally wrong, and so far felt to be wrong by himself, that he will not work by any of them, but will always endeavour to improve upon them in the picture, and so lose the use of them). These three vices of execution are then—first, feebleness of handling, owing to uncertainty of intention; secondly, intentional carelessness of handling, in the hope of getting by accident something more than was meant; and lastly, violence and haste of handling, in the effort to secure as much as possible of the obscure image of which the mind feels itself losing hold. (I am throughout, it will be observed, attributing right feeling to the unimaginative painter; if he lack this, his execution may be cool and determined, as he will set down falsehood without blushing, and ugliness without suffering.) Added to these various evidences of weakness, will be the various vices assumed for the sake of concealment; morbid refinements disguising feebleness—or insolence and coarseness to cover desperation. When the imagination is powerful, the resulting execution is of course the contrary of all this: its first steps will commonly be impetuous, in clearing its ground and getting at its first conception—as we know of Michael Angelo in his smiting his blocks into shape, (see the passage quoted by Sir Charles Clarke in the Essay on Expression, from Blaise de Vigenere) and as is visible in the handling of Tintoret always: as the work approaches completion, the stroke, while it remains certain and firm, because its end is always known, may frequently become slow and careful, both on account of the difficulty of following the pure lines of the conception, and because there is no fear felt of the conception's vanishing before it can be realised; but generally there is a certain degree of impetuosity visible in the works of all the men of high imagination, when they are not working from a study, showing itself in Michael Angelo by the number of blocks he left unfinished, and by some slight evidences in those he completed of his having worked painfully towards the close; so that, except the Duke Lorenzo, the Bacchus of the Florentine gallery, and the Pieta of Genoa, I know not any of his finished works in which his mind is as mightily expressed as in his marble sketches; only, it is always to be observed that impetuosity or rudeness of hand is not necessarily—and, if imaginative, is never—carelessness. In the two landscapes at the end of the Scuola di San Rocco, Tintoret has drawn several large tree-trunks with two strokes of his brush—one for the dark, and another for the light side; and the large rock at the foot of the picture of the Temptation is painted with a few detached touches of grey over a flat brown ground; but the touches of the tree-trunks have been followed by the mind as they went down with the most painful intensity through their every undulation; and the few grey strokes on the stone are so considered that a better stone could not be painted if we took a month to it: and I suppose, generally, it would be utterly impossible to give an example of execution in which less was left to accident, or in which

delight, no care, no perception, except of truth; it is for ever looking under masks, and burning up mists; no fairness of form, no majesty of seeming will satisfy it; the first condition of its existence is incapability of being deceived; and though it sometimes dwells upon and substantiates the fictions of fancy, yet its own operation is to trace to their farthest limit the true laws and likelihoods even of the fictitious creation. This has been well explained by Fuseli, in his allusion to the Centaur of Zeuxis; and there is not perhaps a greater exertion of imaginative power than may be manifested in following out to their farthest limits the necessary consequences of such arbitrary combination; but let not the jests of the fancy be confounded with that after serious work of the imagination which gives them all the nervous verity and substance of which they are capable. Let not the monsters of Chinese earthenware be confounded with the Faun, Satyr, or Centaur.

§ 30. Imagination, how vulgarly understood.

How different this definition of the imagination may be from the idea of it commonly entertained among us, I can hardly say, because I have a very indistinct idea of what is usually meant by the term. I hear modern works constantly praised as being imaginative, in which I can trace no virtue of any kind; but simple, slavish, unpalliated falsehood and exaggeration; I see not what merit there can be in pure, ugly, resolute fiction; it is surely easy enough to be wrong; there are many ways of being unlike nature. I understand

more care was concentrated in every stroke, than the seemingly regardless and impetuous handling of this painter.

On the habit of both Tintoret and Michael Angelo to work straight forward from the block and on the canvass, without study or model, it is needless to insist; for though this is one of the most amazing proofs of their imaginative power, it is a dangerous precedent. No mode of execution ought ever to be taught to a young artist as better than another; he ought to understand the truth of what he has to do, felicitous execution will follow as a matter of course; and if he feels himself capable of getting at the right at once, he will naturally do so without reference to precedent. He ought to hold always that his duty is to attain the highest result he can,—but that no one has any business with the means or time he has taken. If it can be done quickly, let it be so done; if not, let it be done at any rate. For knowing his way he is answerable, and therefore must not walk *doubtingly;* but no one can blame him for walking *cautiously*, if the way be a narrow one, with a slip on each side. He may pause, but he must not hesitate,—and tremble, but must not vacillate.

not what virtue that is which entitles one of these ways to be called imaginative, rather than another; and I am still further embarrassed by hearing the portions of those works called especially imaginative in which there is the most effort at minute and mechanical statement of contemptible details, and in which the artist would have been as actual and absolute in imitation as an echo, if he had known how. Against convictions which I do not understand, I cannot argue; but I may warn the artist that imagination of this strange kind, is not capable of bearing the time test; nothing of its doing has continued its influence over men; and if he desires to take place among the great men of older time, there is but one way for it, and one kind of imagination that will stand the immortal light: I know not how far it is by effort cultivable; but we have evidence enough before us to show in what direction that effort must be made.

§ 31. How its cultivation is dependent on the moral feelings.

We have seen (§ 10.) that the imagination is in no small degree dependent on acuteness of moral emotion; in fact, all moral truth can only thus be apprehended—and it is observable, generally, that all true and deep emotion is imaginative, both in conception and expression; and that the mental sight becomes sharper with every full beat of the heart; and, therefore, all egotism, and selfish care, or regard, are, in proportion to their constancy, destructive of imagination; whose play and power depend altogether on our being able to forget ourselves and enter like possessing spirits into the bodies of things about us.

§ 32. On Independence of Mind.

Again, as the Life of Imagination is in the discovering of truth, it is clear it can have no respect for sayings or opinions: knowing in itself when it has invented truly—restless and tormented except when it has this knowledge, its sense of success or failure is too acute to be affected by praise or blame. Sympathy it desires—but can do without; of opinions it is regardless, not in pride but because it has no vanity, and is conscious of a rule of action and object of aim in which it cannot be mistaken; partly, also, in pure energy of desire and longing to do and to invent more and more, which suffer it not to suck the sweetness of praise—unless a little, with the end of the rod in its hand, and without pausing in its march. It goes straight forward up the hill; no voices

nor mutterings can turn it back, nor petrify it from its purpose.[1]

§ 33. And on habitual reference to nature.

Finally, it is evident, that like the theoretic faculty, the imagination must be fed constantly by external nature —after the illustrations we have given, this may seem mere truism, for it is clear that to the exercise of the penetrative faculty a subject of penetration is necessary; but I note it because many painters of powerful mind have been lost to the world by their suffering the restless writhing of their imagination in its cage to take place of its healthy and exulting activity in the fields of Nature. The most imaginative men always study the hardest, and are the most thirsty for new knowledge. Fancy plays like a squirrel in its circular prison, and is happy; but imagination is a pilgrim on the earth—and her home is in heaven. Shut her from the fields of the celestial mountains—bar her from breathing their lofty, sun-warmed air; and we may as well turn upon her the last bolt of the Tower of Famine, and give the keys to the keeping of the wildest surge that washes Capraja and Gorgona.

CHAPTER IV

OF IMAGINATION CONTEMPLATIVE

§ 1. Imagination contemplative is not part of the essence, but only a habit or mode of the faculty.

We have, in the two preceding chapters, arrived at definite conclusions respecting the power and essence of the imaginative faculty. In these two acts of penetration and combination, its separating and characteristic attributes are entirely developed; it remains for us only to observe a certain habit or mode of operation in which it frequently delights, and by which it addresses itself to our perceptions more forcibly, and asserts its presence more distinctly than in those mighty but more secret workings wherein its life consists.

In our examination of the combining imagination, we chose to assume the first or simple conception to be as clear in the absence as in the presence of the object of it. This, I suppose, is, in point of fact, never the case, nor is an

[1] That which we know of the lives of M. Angelo and Tintoret is eminently illustrative of this temper.

approximation to such distinctness of conception always a characteristic of the imaginative mind. Many persons have thorough and felicitous power of drawing from memory, yet never originate a thought, nor excite an emotion.

The form in which conception actually occurs to ordinary minds appears to derive value and preciousness from that indefiniteness which we alluded to in the second chapter, (§ 2) for there is an unfailing charm in the memory and anticipation of things beautiful, more sunny and spiritual than attaches to their presence; for with their presence it is possible to be sated, and even wearied, but with the imagination of them never; in so far that it needs some self-discipline to prevent the mind from falling into a morbid condition of dissatisfaction with all that it immediately possesses, and continual longing for things absent; and yet I think this charm is not justly to be attributed to the mere vagueness and uncertainty of the conception, except thus far, that of objects whose substantial presence was ugly or painful the sublimity and impressiveness, if there were any, are retained in the conception, while the sensual offensiveness is withdrawn; thus circumstances of horror may be safely touched in verbal description, and for a time dwelt upon by the mind, as often by Homer and Spenser (by the latter frequently with too much grossness as in the description of the combat of the Red-Cross Knight with Errour), which could not for a moment be regarded or tolerated in their reality, or on canvass; and besides this mellowing and softening operation on those it retains, the conceptive faculty has the power of letting go many of them altogether out of its groups of ideas, and retaining only those where the meminisse juvabit will apply; and in this way the entire group of memories becomes altogether delightful: but of those parts of anything which are in themselves beautiful, I think the indistinctness no benefit, but that the brighter they are the better; and that the peculiar charm we feel in conception results from its grasp and blending of ideas rather than from their obscurity, for we do not usually recall, as we have seen, one part at a time only of a pleasant scene, one moment only of a happy day; but together with each single object we summon up a kind of crowded and involved shadowing forth of all the other glories with which it was associated, and into every

§ 2. The ambiguity of Conception.

§ 3. Is not in itself capable of adding to the charm of fair things;

moment we concentrate an epitome of the day; and it will happen frequently that even when the visible objects or actual circumstances are not in numbers remembered; yet the feeling and joy of them is obtained we know not how or whence, and so with a kind of conceptive burning glass, we bend the sunshine of all the day, and the fulness of all the scene upon every point that we successively seize; and this together with more vivid action of Fancy, for I think that the wilful and playful seizures of the points that suit her purpose, and help her springing, whereby she is distinguished from simple conception, take place more easily and actively with the memory of things than in presence of them. But, however this be, and I confess that there is much that I cannot satisfactorily to myself unravel with respect to the nature of simple conception; it is evident that this agreeableness, whatever it be, is not by art attainable, for all art is in some sort realization; it may be the realization of obscurity or indefiniteness, but still it must differ from the mere conception of obscurity and indefiniteness; so that whatever emotions depend absolutely on imperfectness of conception, as the horror of Milton's Death, cannot be rendered by art, for art can only lay hold of things which have shape, and destroys by its touch the fearfulness or pleasurableness of those which shape have none.

§ 4. But gives to the Imagination its regardant power over them.

But on this indistinctness of conception, itself comparatively valueless and unaffecting, is based the operation of the Imaginative faculty with which we are at present concerned, and in which its glory is consummated; whereby, depriving the subject of material and bodily shape, and regarding such of its qualities only as it chooses for particular purpose, it forges these qualities together in such groups and forms as it desires, and gives to their abstract being consistency and reality, by striking them as it were with the die of an image belonging to other matter, which stroke having once received, they pass current at once in the peculiar conjunction and for the peculiar value desired.

Thus, in the description of Satan quoted in the first chapter, "And like a comet burned," the bodily shape of the angel is destroyed, the inflaming of the formless Spirit is alone regarded; and this, and his power of evil associated in one fearful and abstract conception are stamped to

give them distinctness and permanence with the image of the comet, "that fires the length of Ophiuchus huge." Yet this could not be done, but that the image of the comet itself is in a measure indistinct, capable of awful expansion, and full of threatening and fear. Again, in his fall, the imagination binds up the thunder, the resistance, the massy prostration, separates them from the external form, and binds them together by the help of that image of the mountain half sunk; which again would be unfit but for its own indistinctness, and for that glorious addition "with all his Pines," whereby a vitality and spear-like hostility are communicated to its falling form, and the fall is marked as not utter subversion, but sinking only, the pines remaining in their uprightness and unity and threatening of darkness upon the descended precipice: and again, in that yet more noble passage at the close of the fourth book, where almost every operation of the contemplative imagination is concentrated; the angelic squadron first gathered into one burning mass by the single expression "sharpening in mooned horns," then told out in their unity and multitude and stooped hostility, by the image of the wind upon the corn; Satan endowed with godlike strength and endurance in that mighty line, "like Teneriff or Atlas, unremoved," with infinitude of size the next instant, and with all the vagueness and terribleness of spiritual power, by the "horror plumed," and the "*what seemed* both spear and shield."

§ 5. The third office of Fancy distinguished from imagination contemplative.

The third function of Fancy, already spoken of as subordinate to this of the imagination, is the highest of which she is capable; like the imagination, she beholds in the things submitted to her treatment things different from the actual; but the suggestions she follows are not in their nature essential in the object contemplated; and the images resulting, instead of illustrating, may lead the mind away from it, and change the current of contemplative feeling: for as in her operation parallel to Imagination penetrative, we saw her dwelling upon external features, while the nobler sister, Faculty, entered within, so now, when both, from what they see and know in their immediate object, are conjuring up images illustrative or elevatory of it, the fancy necessarily summons those of mere external relationship, and therefore of unaffecting influence; while

the imagination, by every ghost she raises, tells tales about the prison house, and therefore never loses her power over the heart, nor her unity of emotion. On the other hand, the regardant or contemplative action of Fancy is in this different from, and in this nobler, than that mere seizing and likeness-catching operation we saw in her before; that when contemplative, she verily believes in the truth of the vision she has summoned, loses sight of actuality, and beholds the new and spiritual image faithfully and even seriously; whereas before, she summoned no spiritual image, but merely caught the vivid actuality, or the curious resemblance of the real object; not that these two operations are separate, for the Fancy passes gradually from mere vivid right of reality, and witty suggestion of likeness, to a ghostly sight of what is unreal; and through this, in proportion as she begins to feel, she rises towards and partakes of Imagination itself, for Imagination and Fancy are continually united, and it is necessary, when they are so, carefully to distinguish the feelingless part which is Fancy's, from the sentient part, which is Imagination's. Let us take a few instances. Here is fancy, first, very beautiful, in her simple capacity of likeness-catching;

> "To-day we purpose—ay, this hour we mount,
> To spur three leagues towards the Apennine.
> Come down, we pray thee, ere the *hot sun count*
> *His dewy rosary* on the Eglantine."

Seizing on the outside resemblances of bead form, and on the slipping from their threading bough one by one, the fancy is content to lose the heart of the thing, the solemnity of prayer: or perhaps I do the glorious poet wrong in saying this, for the sense of a sun worship and orison in beginning its race, may have been in his mind; and so far as it was so, the passage is imaginative and not fanciful. But that which most readers would accept from it, is the mere flash of the external image, in whose truth the fancy herself does not yet believe, and therefore is not yet contemplative. Here, however, is fancy believing in the images she creates,—

> "It feeds the quick growth of the serpent-vine,
> And the dark linked ivy tangling wild
> And budding, blown, or odour faded blooms,
> Which *star the winds with points of coloured light*
> As they rain through them; and *bright golden globes*
> *Of fruit suspended in their own green heaven.*"

It is not, observe, a mere likeness that is caught here; but the flowers and fruit are entirely deprived by the fancy of their material existence, and contemplated by her seriously and faithfully as stars and worlds; yet it is only external likeness that she catches; she forces the resemblance, and lowers the dignity of the adopted image.

Next take two delicious stanzas of Fancy regardant (believing in her creations), followed by one of heavenly imagination, from Wordsworth's address to the daisy:

"A Nun demure—of lowly port;
Or sprightly maiden—of Love's court,—
In thy simplicity the sport
Of all temptations.
A Queen in crown of rubies drest,
A starveling in a scanty vest,
Are all as seems to suit the best,—
Thy appellations.

"I see thee glittering from afar,
And then thou art a pretty star,—
Not quite so fair as many are
In heaven above thee.
Yet like a star, with glittering crest,
Self-poised in air thou seem'st to rest;—
May peace come never to his nest
Who shall reprove thee.

"Sweet flower—for by that name at last,
When all my reveries are past,
I call thee, and to that cleave fast.
Sweet silent creature,
That breath'st with me, in sun and air,
Do thou, as thou art wont, repair
My heart with gladness, and a share
Of thy meek nature."

§ 6. Various instances.

Observe how spiritual, yet how wandering and playful, the fancy is in the first two stanzas, and how far she flies from the matter in hand, never stopping to brood on the character of any one of the images she summons, and yet for a moment truly seeing and believing in them all; while in the last stanza the imagination returns with its deep feeling to the heart of the flower, and "*cleaves fast*" to that. Compare the operation of the imagination in Coleridge, on one of the most trifling objects that could possibly have been submitted to its action.

"The thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not:
Only that film which fluttered on the grate
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me, who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling Spirit
By its own moods interprets, every where,
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of thought."

Lastly, observe the sweet operation of Fancy regardant, in the following well-known passage from Scott, where both her beholding and transforming powers are seen in their simplicity.

"The rocky summits—split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,—
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair,
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er th' unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dew-drop sheen,
The Briar-rose fell, in streamers green,—
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes
Waved in the west wind's summer sighs."

Let the reader refer to this passage, with its pretty tremulous conclusion above the pine tree, "where glistening streamers waved and danced," and then compare with it the following, where the Imagination operates on a scene nearly similar.

"Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemm'd
The struggling brook; tall spires of windle strae
Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
And nought but knarled roots of ancient pines,
Branchless and blasted, clench'd with grasping roots.
Th' unwilling soil. . . . . .
. . . . . A gradual change was here,
Yet ghastly. For, *as fast years flow away,*
The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
And white; and, where irradiate dewy eyes
Had shone, gleam stony orbs; so from his steps
Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
And musical motions. . . . . .
. . . . . .

. . . . . Where the pass extends
Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
And seems with its accumulated crags
To overhang the world; for wide expand
Beneath the wan stars, and descending moon,
Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom
Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills
Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
Of the remote horizon. The near scene
In naked, and severe simplicity
Made contrast with the universe. A pine
Rock-rooted, stretch'd athwart the vacancy
Its swinging boughs, to each *inconstant blast*
Yielding one only response at each pause,
In most familiar cadence, with the howl,
The thunder, and the hiss of *homeless* streams,
Mingling its solemn song."

In this last passage, the mind never departs from its solemn possession of the solitary scene, the imagination only giving weight, meaning, and strange human sympathies to all its sights and sounds.

In that from Scott[1]—the fancy, led away by the outside resemblance of floating form and hue to the banners, loses the feeling and possession of the scene, and places herself in circumstances of character completely opposite to the quietness and grandeur of the natural objects; this would have been unjustifiable, but that the resemblance occurs to the mind of the monarch, rather than to that of the poet; and it is that, which of all others, would have been the most likely to occur at the time; in this point of view it has high imaginative propriety. Of the same fanciful character is that transformation of the tree trunks into dragons noticed before in Turner's Jason; and in the same way this becomes imaginative as it exhibits the effect of Fear in disposing to

[1] Let it not be supposed that I mean to compare the sickly dreaming of Shelley over clouds and waves, with the masculine and magnificent grasp of men and things which we find in Scott; it only happens that these two passages are more illustrative, by the likeness of the scenery they treat, than any others I could have opposed, and that Shelley is peculiarly distinguished by the faculty of Contemplative imagination. Scott's healthy and truthful feeling would not allow him to represent the benighted hunter provoked by loss of game, horse, and way at once, as indulging in any more exalted flights of imagination than those naturally consequent on the contrast between the night's lodging he expected, and that which befitted him.

morbid perception. Compare with it the real and high action of the Imagination on the same matter in Wordsworth's Yew trees (which I consider the most vigorous and solemn bit of forest landscape ever painted):—

> "Each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres serpentine,
> Up coiling and inveterately convolved,
> *Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks*
> *That threaten the profane.*"

It is too long to quote, but the reader should refer to it: let him note especially, if painter, that pure touch of colour, "by sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged."

In the same way, the blasted trunk on the left, in Turner's drawing of the spot where Harold fell at the battle of Hastings, takes, where its boughs first separate, the shape of the head of an arrow; this, which is mere fancy in itself, is imagination as it supposes in the spectator an excited condition of feeling dependent on the history of the spot.

§ 7. Morbid or Nervous Fancy.

I have been led perhaps into too great detail in illustrating these points; but I think it is of no small importance to prove how in all cases the Imagination is based upon, and appeals to, a deep heart feeling; and how faithful and earnest it is in contemplation of the subject matter, never losing sight of it, nor disguising it, but depriving it of extraneous and material accidents, and regarding it in its disembodied essence. I have not, however, sufficiently noted in opposition to it, that diseased action of the fancy which depends more on nervous temperament than intellectual power; and which, as in dreaming, fever, insanity, and other morbid conditions of mind, is frequently a source of daring and inventive conception; and so the visionary appearances resulting from disturbances of the frame by passion, and from the rapid tendency of the mind to invest with shape and intelligence the active influences about it, as in the various demons, spirits, and fairies, of all imaginative nations; which, however, I consider are no more to be ranked as right creations of fancy or imagination than things actually seen and heard; for the action of the nerves is I suppose the same, whether externally caused, or from within, although very grand imagination may be shown by the intellectual anticipation

and realization of such impressions; as in that glorious vignette of Turner's to the voyage of Columbus. "Slowly along the evening sky they went." Note especially therein, how admirably true to the natural form, and yet how suggestive of the battlement, he has rendered the level flake of evening cloud.

I believe that it is unnecessary for me to enter into farther detail of illustration respecting these points; for fuller explanation of the operations of the contemplative faculty of things verbally expressible, the reader may be referred to Wordsworth's preface to his poems; it only remains for us, here, to examine how far this imaginative or abstract conception is to be conveyed by the material art of the sculptor or the painter.

§ 8. The action of Contemplative imagination is not to be expressed by art.

Now, it is evident that the bold action of either the fancy or the imagination, dependent on a bodiless and spiritual image of the object, is not to be by lines or colours represented. We cannot, in the painting of Satan fallen, suggest any image of pines or crags,—neither can we assimilate the briar and the banner, nor give human sympathy to the motion of the film, nor voice to the swinging of the pines.

Yet certain powers there are, within due limits, of marking the thing represented with an ideal character; and it was to these powers that I alluded in defining the meaning of the term ideal, in the thirteenth chapter of the preceding section. For it is by this operation that the productions of high art are separated from those of the Realist.

§ 9. Except under narrow limits.—1st. Abstract rendering of form without colour.

And, first, there is evidently capability of separating colour and form, and considering either separately. Form we find abstractedly considered by the sculptor, how far it would be possible to advantage a statue by the addition of colour, I venture not to affirm; the question is too extensive to be here discussed. High authorities, and ancient practice, are in favour of colour; so the sculpture of the middle ages: the two statues of Mino da Fiesole in the church of St[a]. Caterina at Pisa have been coloured, the irises of the eyes painted dark, and the hair gilded, as also I think the Madonna in St[a]. Maria della Spina; the eyes have been painted in the sculptures of

Orcagna in Or San Michele, but it looks like a remnant of barbarism (compare the pulpit of Guido da Como, in the church of San Bartolomeo at Pistoja), and I have never seen colour on any solid forms, that did not, to my mind, neutralize all other power; the porcelains of Luca della Robbia are painful examples, and in lower art, Florentine mosaic in relief; gilding is more admissible, and tells sometimes sweetly upon figures of quaint design, as on the pulpit of St^a. Maria Novella, while it spoils the classical ornaments of the mouldings. But the truest grandeur of sculpture I believe to be in the white form; something of this feeling may be owing to the difficulty, or rather the impossibility, of obtaining truly noble colour upon it, but if we could colour the Elgin marbles with the flesh tint of Giorgione, I had rather not have it done.

§ 10. Of colour without form.

Colour, without form, is less frequently obtainable; and it may be doubted whether it be desirable: yet I think that to the full enjoyment of it, a certain abandonment of form is necessary; sometimes by reducing it to the shapeless glitter of the gem, as often Tintoret and Bassano; sometimes by loss of outline and blending of parts, as Turner; sometimes by flatness of mass, as often Giorgione and Titian. How far it is possible for the painter to represent those mountains of Shelley as the poet sees them, "mingling *their flames* with twilight," I cannot say; but my impression is, that there is no true abstract mode of considering colour; and that all the loss of form in the works of Titian or Turner, is not ideal, but the representation of the natural conditions under which bright colour is seen; for form is always in a measure lost by nature herself when colour is very vivid.

§ 11. Or of both without texture.

Again, there is capability of representing the essential character, form, and colour of an object, without external texture. On this point much has been said by Reynolds and others, and it is, indeed, perhaps the most unfailing characteristic of great manner in painting. Compare a dog of Edwin Landseer with a dog of Paul Veronese. In the first, the outward texture is wrought out with exquisite dexterity of handling, and minute attention to all the accidents of curl and gloss which can give appearance of reality, while the hue and power of

the sunshine, and the truth of the shadow on all these forms is necessarily neglected, and the large relations of the animal as a mass of colour to the sky or ground, or other parts of the picture, utterly lost. This is realism at the expense of Ideality, it is treatment essentially unimaginative.[1] With Veronese, there is no curling nor crisping, no glossiness nor sparkle, hardly even hair; a mere type of hide, laid on with a few scene-painter's touches. But the essence of dog is there, the entire, magnificent, generic animal type, muscular and living, and with broad, pure, sunny daylight upon him, and bearing his true and harmonious relation of colour to all colour about him. This is ideal treatment.

The same treatment is found in the works of all the greatest men, they all paint the lion more than his mane, and the horse rather than his hide; and I think also they are often more careful to obtain the right expression of large and universal light and colour, than local tints; for the warmth of sunshine, and the force of sunlighted hue are always sublime on whatever subject they may be exhibited; and so also are light and shade, if grandly arranged, as may be well seen in an etching of Rembrandt's of a spotted shell, which he has made altogether sublime by broad truth and large ideality of light and shade; and so I have seen frequent instances of very grand ideality in treatment of the most commonplace still life, by our own Hunt, where the petty glosses, and delicacies, and minor forms, are all merged in a broad glow of suffused colour; so also in pieces of the same kind by Etty, where, however, though the richness and play of colour are greater, and the arrangement grander, there is less expression of light, neither is there anything in modern art that can be set beside some choice passages of Hunt in this respect.

Again, it is possible to represent objects capable of various accidents in a generic or symbolical form.

[1] I do not mean to withdraw the praise I have given, and shall always be willing to give to such pictures as the Old Shepherd's Chief Mourner, and to all in which the character and inner life of animals are developed. But all lovers of art must regret to find Mr. Landseer wasting his energies on such inanities as the "Shoeing," and sacrificing, colour, expression, and action, to an imitation of glossy hide.

How far this may be done with things having necessary form, as animals, I am not prepared to say. The Lions of the Egyptian room in the British Museum, and the Fish beside Michael Angelo's Jonah, are instances; and there is imaginative power about both which we find not in the more perfectly realized Florentine boar, nor in Raphael's fish of the Draught. And yet the propriety and nobility of these types depend on the architectural use and character of the one, and on the typical meaning of the other, we should be grieved to see the forms of the Egyptian lion substituted for those of Raphael's in its struggle with Samson, nor would the whale of Michael Angelo be tolerated in the nets of Gennesaret. So that I think it is only when the figure of the creature stands not for any representation of vitality, but merely for a letter or type of certain symbolical meaning, or else is adopted as a form of decoration or support in architecture, that such generalization is allowable, and in such circumstances I think it necessary, always provided it be based, as in the instances given I conceive it to be, upon thorough knowledge of the creature symbolized and wrought out by a master hand, and these conditions being observed, I believe it to be right and necessary in architecture to modify all animal forms by a severe architectural stamp, and in symbolical use of them, to adopt a typical form, to which practice the contrary, and its evil consequences are ludicrously exhibited in the St. Peter of Carlo Dolci in the Pitti palace, which owing to the prominent, glossy plumed, and crimson combed cock is liable to be taken for the portrait of a poulterer, only let it be observed that the treatment of the animal form here is offensive, not only from its realization, but from the pettiness and meanness of its realization; for it might, in other hands but Carlo Dolci's, have been a sublime cock, though a real one, but in his, it is fit for nothing but the spit. Compare as an example partly of symbolical treatment, partly of magnificent realization, that supernatural Lion of Tintoret in the picture of the Doge Loredano before the Madonna with the plumes of his mighty wings clashed together in cloudlike repose, and the strength of the Sea winds shut within their folding. And note farther the

§ 12. Abstraction or typical representation of animal form.

§ 13. Either when it is symbolically used,

difference between the Typical use of the animal, as in this case, and that of the Fish of Jonah (and again the Fish before mentioned whose form is indicated in the clouds of the Baptism), and the actual occurrence of the creature itself, with concealed meaning, as the Ass colt of the crucifixion, which it was necessary to paint as such, and not as an ideal form.

§ 14. Or in architectural decoration.

I cannot enter here into the question of the exact degree of severity and abstraction necessary in the forms of living things architecturally employed, my own feeling on the subject is, though I dare not lay it down as a principle (with the Parthenon pediment standing against me like the shield of Ajax), that no perfect representation of animal form is right in architectural decoration. For my own part, I had much rather see the metopes in the Elgin room of the British Museum, and the Parthenon without them, than have them together, and I would not surrender, in an architectural point of view, one mighty line of the colossal, quiet, life-in-death statue mountains of Egypt with their narrow fixed eyes and hands on their rocky limbs, nor one Romanesque façade with its porphyry mosaic of indefinable monsters, nor one Gothic moulding of rigid saints and grinning goblins, for ten Parthenons; and, I believe, I could show some rational ground for this seeming barbarity if this were the place to do so, but at present I can only ask the reader to compare the effect of the so-called barbarous ancient mosaics on the front of St. Mark's, as they have been recorded, happily, by the faithfulness of the good Gentile Bellini, in one of his pictures now in the Venice gallery, with the veritably barbarous pictorial substitutions of the fifteenth century (one only of the old mosaics remains, or did remain till lately, over the northern door, but it is probably by this time torn down by some of the Venetian committees of taste), and also I would have the old portions of the interior ceiling, or of the mosaics of Murano and Torcello, and the glorious Cimabue mosaic of Pisa, and the roof of the Baptistery at Parma (that of the Florence Baptistery is a bad example, owing to its crude whites and complicated mosaic of small forms) all of which are as barbarous as they can well be, in a certain sense, but mighty in their barbarism, compared with any architectural decorations

whatsoever, consisting of professedly perfect animal forms, from the vile frescoes of Federigo Zuccaro at Florence to the ceiling of the Sistine, and again compare the professedly perfect sculpture of Milan Cathedral with the statues of the porches of Chartres; only be it always observed that it is not rudeness and ignorance of art, but intellectually awful abstraction that I uphold, and also be it noted that in all ornament which takes place in the general effect merely as so much fretted stone, in capitals and other pieces of minute detail, the forms may be, and perhaps ought to be, elaborately imitative; and in this respect again the capitals of St. Mark's church, and of the Doge's palace at Venice, may be an example to the architects of all the world, in their boundless inventiveness, unfailing elegance, and elaborate finish; there is more mind poured out in turning a single angle of that church than would serve to build a modern cathedral;[1] and of the careful finish of the work, this may serve for example, that one of the capitals of the Doge's palace is formed of eight heads of different animals, of which one is a bear's with a honey comb in the mouth, whose carved *cells* are *hexagonal*.

§ 15 Exception in delicate and superimposed ornament.

So far, then, of the abstraction proper to architecture, and to symbolical uses, of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter at length, referring to it only at present as one of the operations of imagination contemplative; other abstractions there are which are necessarily consequent on the imperfection of materials, as of the hair in sculpture, which is necessarily treated in masses that are in no sort imitative, but only stand for hair, and have the grace, flow, and feeling

§ 16. Abstraction necessary from imperfection of materials.

[1] I have not brought forward any instances of the Imaginative power in architecture, as my object is not at present to exhibit its operation in all matter, but only to define its essence; but it may be well to note, in our own new houses of Parliament, how far a building approved by a committee of Taste may proceed without manifestation either of imagination or composition: it remains to be seen how far the towers may redeem it; and I allude to it at present unwillingly, and only in the desire of influencing, so far as I may, those who have the power to prevent the adoption of a design for a bridge to take place of Westminster, which was exhibited in 1844 at the Royal Academy, professing to be in harmony with the new building, but which was fit only to carry a railroad over a canal.

of it without the texture or division, and other abstractions there are in which the form of one thing is fancifully indicated in the matter of another; as in phantoms and cloud shapes, the use of which, in mighty hands, is often most impressive, as in the cloudy charioted Apollo of Nicolo Poussin in our own gallery, which the reader may oppose to the substantial Apollo, in Wilson's Niobe; and again the phantom vignette of Turner already noticed, only such operations of the imagination are to be held of lower kind, and dangerous consequence, if frequently trusted in, for those painters only have the right imaginative power who can set the supernatural form before us fleshed and boned like ourselves.[1] Other abstractions occur, frequently, of things which have much accidental variety of form, as of waves, on Greek sculptures in successive volutes, and of clouds often in supporting volumes in the sacred pictures; but these I do not look upon as results of imagination at all, but mere signs and letters; and whenever a very highly imaginative mind touches them, it always realizes as far as may be. Even Titian is content to use, at the top of his S. Pietro Martiri, the conventional, round, opaque cloud, which cuts his trees open like a gouge; but Tintoret, in his picture of the Golden Calf, though compelled to represent the Sinai under conventional form, in order that the receiving of the tables might be seen at the top of it, yet so soon as it is possible to give more truth, he is ready with it; he takes a grand fold of horizontal cloud straight from the flanks of the Alps, and shows the forests of the mountains through its misty volume, like sea-weed through deep sea.[2] Nevertheless, when the realization is impossible, bold symbolism is of the highest value, and in religious art, as we shall presently see, even necessary, as of the rays of light in the Titian woodcut of St. Francis before noticed, and sometimes the attention is directed by some such strange form to the meaning of the image, which may be missed if it remains in its natural purity, (as, I suppose, few, in looking at the Cephalus and Procris of

§ 17. Abstractions of things capable of varied accident are not imaginative;

§ 18. Yet sometimes valuable.

[1] Comp. Ch. V. § 5.

[2] All the clouds of Tintoret are sublime; the worst that I know in art are Correggio's, especially in the Madonna della Scudella, and Dome of Parma.

Turner, note the sympathy of those faint rays that are just drawing back and dying between the trunks of the far off forest, with the ebbing life of the nymph; unless, indeed, they happen to recollect the same sympathy marked by Shelley in the Alastor); but the imagination is not shown in any such modifications; however, in some cases they may be valuable (in the Cephalus they would be utterly destructive), and I note them merely in consequence of their peculiar use in religious art, presently to be examined.

§ 19. Exaggeration. Its laws and limits. First, In scale of representation.

The last mode we have here to note in which the imagination regardant may be expressed in art is exaggeration, of which, as it is the vice of all bad artists, and may be constantly resorted to without any warrant of imagination, it is necessary to note strictly the admissible limits.

In the first place, a colossal statue is necessarily no more an exaggeration of what it represents, than a miniature is a diminution, it need not be a representation of a giant, but a representation, on a large scale, of a man; only it is to be observed, that, as any plane intersecting the cone of rays between us and the object, must receive an image smaller than the object; a small image is rationally and completely expressive of a larger one; but not a large of a small one. Hence I think that all statues above the Elgin standard, or that of Michael Angelo's Night and Morning, are, in a measure, taken by the eye for representations of giants, and I think them always disagreeable. The amount of exaggeration admitted by Michael Angelo is valuable, because it separates the emblematic from the human form, and gives greater freedom to the grand lines of the frame; for notice of his scientific system of increase of size I may refer the reader to Sir Charles Bell's remarks on the statues of the Medici chapel; but there is one circumstance which Sir Charles has not noticed, and in the interpretation of which, therefore, it is likely I may be myself wrong: that the extremities are singularly small in proportion to the limbs, by which means there is an expression given of strength and activity greater than in the ordinary human type, which appears to me to be an allowance for that alteration in proportion necessitated by increase of size, of which we took note in Chap. VI. of the first Section, § 10., note; not but that Michael Angelo

always makes the extremities comparatively small, but smallest, comparatively, in his largest works; so I think, from the size of the head, it may be conjectured respecting the Theseus of the Elgins. Such adaptations are not necessary when the exaggerated image is spectral: for as the laws of matter in that case can have no operation, we may expand the form as far as we choose, only let careful distinction be made between the size of the thing represented, and the scale of the representation. The canvass on which Fuseli has stretched his Satan in the schools of the Royal Academy is a mere concession to inability. He might have made him look more gigantic in one of a foot square.

§ 20. Secondly, Of things capable of variety of scale.

Another kind of exaggeration is of things whose size is variable to a size or degree greater than that usual with them, as in waves and mountains; and there are hardly any limits to this exaggeration, so long as the laws which nature observes in her increase be observed. Thus, for instance; the form and polished surface of a breaking ripple three inches high are not representation of either the form or the surface of the surf of a storm, nodding ten feet above the beach; neither would the cutting ripple of a breeze upon a lake if simply exaggerated, represent the forms of Atlantic surges; but as nature increases her bulk, she diminishes the angles of ascent, and increases her divisions; and if we would represent surges of size greater than ever existed, which it is lawful to do, we must carry out these operations to still greater extent. Thus Turner, in his picture of the Slave Ship, divides the whole sea into two masses of enormous swell, and conceals the horizon by a gradual slope of only two or three degrees. This is intellectual exaggeration. In the Academy exhibition of 1843, there was, in one of the smaller rooms, a black picture of a storm, in which there appeared on the near sea, just about to be overwhelmed by an enormous breaker, curling right over it, an object at first sight liable to be taken for a walnut shell, but which, on close examination, proved to be a ship with mast and sail, with Christ and his twelve disciples in it. This is childish exaggeration, because it is impossible, by the laws of matter and motion, that such a breaker should ever exist. Again in mountains, we have repeatedly observed the necessary building up and multi-

tudinous division of the higher peaks, and the smallness of the slopes by which they usually rise. We may, therefore, build up the mountain as high as we please, but we must do it in nature's way, and not in impossible peaks and precipices; not that but a daring feature is admissible here and there, as the Matterhorn is admitted by nature; but we must not compose a picture out of such exceptions; we may use them, but they must be as exceptions exhibited. I shall have much to say, when we come to treat of the sublime, of the various modes of treating mountain form, so that at present I shall only point to an unfortunate instance of inexcusable and effectless exaggeration in the distance of Turner's vignette to Milton (the temptation on the mountain), and desire the reader to compare it with legitimate exaggeration, in the vignette to the second part of Jacqueline, in Rogers's poems.

§ 21. Thirdly, Necessary in expression of characteristic features on diminished scale.

Another kind of Exaggeration is necessary to retain the characteristic impressions of nature on reduced scale; it is not possible, for instance, to give the leafage of trees in its proper proportion, when the trees represented are large, without entirely losing their grace of form and curvature; of this the best proof is found in the calotype or daguerreotype, which fail in foliage, not only because the green rays are ineffective, but because, on the small scale of the image, the reduced leaves lose their organization, and look like moss attached to sticks. In order to retain, therefore, the character of flexibility and beauty of foliage, the painter is often compelled to increase the proportionate size of the leaves, and to arrange them in generic masses. Of this treatment compare the grand examples throughout the Liber Studiorum. It is by such means only that the ideal character of objects is to be preserved; as we before observed in the 13th chapter of the first section. In all these cases exaggeration is only lawful as the sole means of arriving at truth of impression when strict fidelity is out of the question.

Other modes of Exaggeration there are, on which I shall not at present farther insist, the proper place for their discussion being in treating of the sublime, and these which I have at present instanced are enough to establish the point at issue, respecting imaginative verity, inasmuch as we find

that exaggeration itself, if imaginative, is referred to principles of truth, and of actual being.

§ 22. Recapitulation.

We have now, I think, reviewed the various modes in which imagination contemplative may be exhibited in art, and arrived at all necessary certainties respecting the essence of the Faculty: which we have found in its three functions, Associative of Truth, Penetrative of Truth, and Contemplative of Truth; and having no dealings nor relations with any kind of falsity. One task, however, remains to us, namely, to observe the operation of the Theoretic and Imaginative faculties together, in the attempt at realization to the bodily sense of Beauty supernatural and Divine.

CHAPTER V

OF THE SUPERHUMAN IDEAL

§ 1. The subject is not to be here treated in detail.

In our investigation, in the first section, of the laws of beauty, we confined ourselves to the observation of lower nature, or of humanity. We were prevented from proceeding to deduce conclusions respecting divine ideality by our not having then established any principles respecting the Imaginative faculty, by which, under the discipline of the Theoretic, such ideality is conceived. I had purposed to conclude the present Section by a careful examination of this subject; but as this is evidently foreign to the matter immediately under discussion, and involves questions of great intricacy respecting the development of mind among those pagan nations who are supposed to have produced high examples of spiritual ideality, I believe it will be better to delay such inquiries until we have concluded our detailed observation of the beauty of visible nature; and I shall therefore at present take notice only of one or two broad principles, which were referred to, or implied, in the chapter respecting the Human ideal, and without the enunciation of which, that chapter might lead to false conclusions.

There are four ways in which Beings supernatural may be conceived as manifesting themselves to human sense.

§ 2. The conceivable modes of manifestation of Spiritual Beings are four.

The first, by external types, signs, or influences; as God to Moses in the flames of the bush, and to Elijah in the voice of Horeb.

The second, by the assuming of a form not properly belonging to them; as the Holy Spirit of that of a Dove, the second person of the Trinity of that of a Lamb; and so such manifestations, under Angelic or other form, of the first person of the Trinity, as seem to have been made to Abraham, Moses, and Ezekiel.

The third, by the manifestation of a form properly belonging to them, but not necessarily seen; as of the Risen Christ to his disciples when the doors were shut. And the fourth, by their operation on the human form which they influence or inspire, as in the shining of the face of Moses.

It is evident that in all these cases, wherever there is form at all, it is the form of some creature to us known. It is no new form peculiar to spirit, nor can it be. We can conceive of none. Our inquiry is simply therefore, by what modifications those creature forms to us known, as of a lamb, a bird, or a human creature, may be explained as signs or habitations of Divinity, or of angelic essence, and not creatures such as they seem.

§ 3. And these are in or through creature forms familiar to us.

This may be done in two ways. First, by effecting some change in the appearance of the creature inconsistent with its actual nature; as by giving it colossal size, or unnatural colour or material, as of gold, or silver, or flame, instead of flesh; or taking away its property of matter altogether, and forming it of light or shade, or in an intermediate step, of cloud or vapour; or explaining it by terrible concomitant circumstances, as of wounds in the body, or strange lights and seemings round about it; or by joining of two bodies together as in angels' wings. Of all which means of attaining supernatural character (which, though in their nature ordinary and vulgar, are yet effective and very glorious in mighty hands) we have already seen the limits in speaking of the Imagination.

§ 4. Supernatural character may be impressed on these either by phenomena inconsistent with their common nature (compare Chap. IV. § 16.),

But the second means of obtaining supernatural character is that with which we are now concerned, namely, retaining the actual form in its full and material presence, and, without aid from any external interpretation whatsoever, to raise that form by mere inherent dignity to such pitch of power and impressiveness as cannot but assert and stamp it for superhuman.

§ 5. Or by inherent dignity.

On the north side of the Campo Santo at Pisa, are a series of paintings from the Old Testament history by Benozzo Gozzoli. In the earlier of these, angelic presences, mingled with human, occur frequently, illustrated by no awfulness of light, nor incorporeal tracing. Clear revealed they move, in human forms, in the broad daylight and on the open earth, side by side, and, hand in hand with men. But they never miss of the angel.

He who can do this, has reached the last pinnacle and utmost power of ideal, or any other art. He stands in no need, thenceforward, of cloud, nor lightning, nor tempest, nor terror of mystery. His sublime is independent of the elements. It is of that which shall stand when they shall melt with fervent heat, and light the firmament when the sun is as sackcloth of hair.

Let us consider by what means this has been effected, so far as they are by analysis traceable; and that is not far, for here, as always, we find that the greater part of what has been rightly accomplished has been done by faith and intense feeling, and cannot, by aid of any rules or teaching, be either tried, estimated, or imitated.

§ 6. 1st. Of the expression of Inspiration.

And first, of the expression of supernatural influence on forms actually human, as of Sibyl or Prophet. It is evident that not only here is it unnecessary, but we are not altogether at liberty to trust for expression to the utmost ennobling of the human form: for we cannot do more than this, when that form is to be the actual representation, and not the recipient of divine presence. Hence in order to retain the actual humanity definitely, we must leave upon it such signs of the operation of Sin and the liability to Death as are consistent with human ideality, and often more than these, definite signs of immediate and active evil, when the prophetic spirit is to be expressed in men such as were Saul and Balaam; neither may we ever, with just discrimination,

touch the utmost limits of beauty in human form when inspiration is to be expressed and not angelic or divine being; of which reserve and subjection the most instructive instances are found in the works of Angelico, who invariably uses inferior types for the features of humanity, even glorified, (excepting always the Madonna), nor ever exerts his full power of beauty either in feature or expression except in angels or in the Madonna or in Christ. Now the expression of Spiritual influence without supreme elevation of the bodily type we have seen to be a work of Imagination penetrative, and we found it accomplished by Michael Angelo; but I think by him only. I am aware of no one else who, to my mind, has expressed the inspiration of Prophet or Sibyl; this however, I affirm not, but shall leave to the determination of the reader, as the principles at present to be noted refer entirely to that elevation of the Creature form necessary when it is actually representative of a Spiritual being.

§ 7. No representation of that which is more than creature is possible.

I have affirmed in the conclusion of the first section that "of that which is more than Creature no Creature ever conceived." I think this almost self-evident, for it is clear that the illimitableness of Divine attributes cannot be by matter represented (though it may be typified) and I believe that all who are acquainted with the range of sacred art will admit, not only that no representation of Christ has ever been even partially successful, but that the greatest painters fall therein below their accustomed level; Perugino and Fra Angelico especially; Leonardo has I think done best, but perhaps the beauty of the fragment left at Milan (for in spite of all that is said of repainting and destruction, that Cenacola is still the finest in existence) is as much dependent on the very untraceableness resulting from injury as on its original perfection. Of more daring attempts at representation of Divinity we need not speak; only this is to be noted respecting them, that though by the ignorant Romanists many such efforts were made under the idea of actual representation, (note the way in which Cellini speaks of the seal made for the Pope) by the nobler among them I suppose they were intended, and by us at any rate they may always be received, as mere symbols, the noblest that could be employed, but as much symbols still as a triangle, or the

Alpha and Omega; nor do I think that the most scrupulous amongst Christians ought to desire to exchange the power obtained by the use of this symbol in Michael Angelo's creation of Adam and of Eve for the effect which would be produced by the substitution of a triangle or any other sign in place of it. Of these efforts then we need reason no farther, but may limit ourselves to considering the purest modes of giving a conception of superhuman but still creature form, as of angels; in equal rank with whom, perhaps, we may without offence place the mother of Christ: at least we must so regard the type of the Madonna in receiving it from Romanist painters.[1]

§ 8. Supernatural character expressed by modification of accessaries.

And first, much is to be done by right modification of accessary circumstances, so as to express miraculous power exercised over them by the Spiritual creature. There is a beautiful instance of this in John Bellini's picture of St. Jerome at Venice. The Saint sits upon a rock, his grand form defined against clear green open sky; he is reading, a noble tree springs out of a cleft in the rock, bends itself suddenly back to form a rest for the volume, then shoots up into the sky. There is something very beautiful in this obedient ministry of the lower creature; but be it observed that the sweet feeling of the whole depends upon the service

[1] I take no note of the representation of *Evil* Spirits, since throughout we have been occupied in the pursuit of Beauty; but it may be observed generally, that there is great difficulty to be overcome in attempts of this kind, because the elevation of the form necessary to give it spirituality destroys the appearance of evil; hence even the greatest painters have been reduced to receive aid from the fancy, and to eke out all they could conceive of malignity by help of horns, hoofs, and claws. Giotto's Satan in the Campo Santo, with the serpent gnawing the heart, is fine; so many of the fiends of Orcagna, and always those of Michael Angelo. Tintoret, in the Temptation, with his usual truth of invention, has represented the Evil Spirit under the form of a fair angel, the wings burning with crimson and silver, the face sensual and treacherous. It is instructive to compare the results of imagination associated with powerful fancy in the demons of these great painters, or even in such nightmares as that of Salvator already spoken of Sec. I. Chap. V. § 12. (note), with the simple ugliness of idiotic distortion in the meaningless, terrorless monsters of Bronzino in the large picture of the Uffizii, where the painter, utterly uninventive, having assembled all that is abominable of hanging flesh, bony limbs, crane necks, staring eyes, and straggling hair, cannot yet, by the sum and substance of all, obtain as much real fearfulness as an imaginative painter could throw into the turn of a lip or the knitting of a brow.

being such as is consistent with its nature. It is not animated, it does not *listen* to the saint, nor bend itself towards him as if in affection, this would have been mere fancy, illegitimate and effectless. But the simple bend of the trunk to receive the book is miraculous subjection of the true nature of the tree; it is therefore imaginative, and very touching.

§ 9. Landscape of the religious painters. Its character is eminently symmetrical.

It is not often however that the religious painters even go this length; they content themselves usually with impressing on the landscape perfect symmetry and order, such as may seem consistent with, or induced by the spiritual nature they would represent. All signs of decay, disturbance, and imperfection, are also banished; and in doing this it is evident that some unnaturalness and singularity must result, inasmuch as there are no veritable forms of landscape but express or imply a state of progression or of imperfection. All mountain forms are seen to be produced by convulsion and modelled by decay; the finer forms of cloud have stories in them about storm; all forest grouping is wrought out with varieties of strength and growth among its several members, and bears evidences of struggle with unkind influences. All such appearances are banished in the supernatural landscape; the trees grow straight, equally branched on each side, and of such slight and feathery frame as shows them never to have encountered blight or frost or tempest. The mountains stand up in fantastic pinnacles; there is on them no trace of torrent, no scathe of lightning; no fallen fragments encumber their foundations, no worn ravines divide their flanks; the seas are always waveless, the skies always calm, crossed only by fair, horizontal, lightly wreathed, white clouds.

§ 10. Landscape of Benozzo Gozzoli.

In some cases these conditions result partly from feeling, partly from ignorance of the facts of nature, or incapability of representing them, as in the first type of the treatment found in Giotto and his school; in others they are observed on principle, as by Benozzo Gozzoli, Perugino, and Raphael. There is a beautiful instance by the former in the frescoes of the Ricardi palace, where, behind the adoring angel groups, the landscape is governed by the most absolute symmetry; roses, and pomegranates, their leaves drawn to the last rib

and vein, twine themselves in fair and perfect order about delicate trellises; broad stone pines and tall cypresses overshadow them, bright birds hover here and there in the serene sky, and groups of angels, hand joined with hand, and wing with wing, glide and float through the glades of the unentangled forest. But behind the human figures, behind the pomp and turbulence of the Kingly procession descending from the distant hills, the spirit of the landscape is changed. Severer mountains rise in the distance, ruder prominences and less flowery vary the nearer ground, and gloomy shadows remain unbroken beneath the forest branches.

§ 11. Landscape of Perugino and Raffaelle.

The landscape of Perugino, for grace, purity, and as much of nature as is consistent with the above named conditions, is unrivalled; and the more interesting because in him certainly whatever limits are set to the rendering of nature proceed not from incapability. The sea is in the distance almost always, then some blue promontories and undulating dewy park ground, studded with glittering trees; in the landscape of the fresco in St^a. Maria Maddalena at Florence there is more variety than is usual with him; a gentle river winds round the bases of rocky hills, a river like our own Wye or Tees in their loveliest reaches; level meadows stretch away on its opposite side; mounds set with slender stemmed foliage occupy the nearer ground, and a small village with its simple spire peeps from the forest at the bend of the valley, and it is remarkable that, in architecture thus employed, neither Perugino nor any other of the ideal painters ever use Italian forms but always Transalpine, both of church and castle. The little landscape which forms the background of his own portrait in the Uffizii is another highly finished and characteristic example. The landscape of Raffaelle was learned from his father, and continued for some time little modified, though expressed with greater refinement. It became afterwards conventional and poor, and in some cases altogether meaningless. The haystacks and vulgar trees behind the St. Cecilia at Bologna form a painful contrast to the pure space of mountain country in the Perugino opposite.[1]

[1] I have not thought it necessary to give farther instances at present since I purpose hereafter to give numerous examples of this kind of ideal

In all these cases, while I would uphold the landscape thus employed and treated, as worthy of all admiration, I should be sorry to advance it for imitation. What is right in its mannerism arose from keen feeling in the painter: imitated without the same feeling, it would be painful; the only safe mode of following in such steps is to attain perfect knowledge of nature herself, and then to suffer our own feelings to guide us in the selection of what is fitting for any particular purpose. Every painter ought to paint what he himself loves, not what others have loved; if his mind be pure and sweetly toned what he loves will be lovely; if otherwise, no example can guide his selection, no precept govern his hand; and farther let it be distinctly observed, that all this mannered landscape is only right under the supposition of its being a background to some supernatural presence; behind mortal beings it would be wrong, and by itself, as landscape, ridiculous; and farther, the chief virtue of it results from the exquisite refinement of those natural details consistent with its character from the botanical drawing of the flowers and the clearness and brightness of the sky.

§ 12. Such landscape is not to be imitated.

Another mode of attaining supernatural character is by purity of colour almost shadowless, no more darkness being allowed than is absolutely necessary for the explanation of the forms, and the vividness of the effect enhanced as far as may be by use of gilding, enamel, and other jewellery. I think the smaller works of Angelico are perfect models in this respect; the glories about the heads being of beaten rays of gold, on which the light plays and changes as the spectator moves; (and which therefore throw the purest flesh colour out in dark relief) and such colour and light being obtained by the enamelling of the angel wings as of course is utterly unattainable by any other expedient of art; the colours of the draperies always pure and pale; blue, rose, or tender green, or brown, but never dark or gloomy; the faces

§ 13. Colour and Decoration, their use in representations of the Supernatural.

landscape. Of true and noble landscape, as such, I am aware of no instances except where least they might have been expected, among the sea-bred Venetians. Ghirlandajo shows keen, though prosaic, sense of nature in that view of Venice behind an Adoration of the Magi in the Uffizii, but he at last walled himself up among gilded entablatures. Masaccio indeed has given one grand example in the fresco of the Tribute Money, but its colour is now nearly lost.

of the most celestial fairness, brightly flushed: the height and glow of this flush are noticed by Constantin as reserved by the older painters for spiritual beings, as if expressive of light seen through the body.

I cannot think it necessary while I insist on the value of all these seemingly childish means when in the hands of a noble painter, to assert also their futility, and even absurdity, if employed by no exalted power. I think the error has commonly been on the side of scorn, and that we reject much in our foolish vanity, which if wiser and more earnest we should delight in. But two points it is very necessary to note in the use of such accessaries.

§ 14. Decoration so used must be Generic,

The first that the ornaments used by Angelico Giotto, and Perugino, but especially by Angelico, are always of a generic and abstract character. They are not diamonds, nor brocades, nor velvets, nor gold embroideries; they are mere spots of gold or of colour, simple patterns upon *textureless* draperies; the angel wings burn with transparent crimson and purple and amber, but they are not set forth with peacocks' plumés; the golden circlets gleam with changeful light, but they are not beaded with elaborate pearls, nor set with studied sapphires.

In the works of Filippino Lippi, Mantegna, and many other painters following, interesting examples may be found of the opposite treatment; and as in Lippi the heads are usually very sweet, and the composition severe, the degrading effect of the realized decorations and imitated dress may be seen in him simply, and without any addition of painfulness from other deficiencies of feeling. The larger of the two pictures in the Tuscan room of the Uffizii, but for this defect, would have been a very noble ideal work.

§ 15. And Colour pure.

The second point to be observed is that brightness of colour is altogether inadmissible without purity and harmony; and that the sacred painters must not be followed in their frankness of unshadowed colour unless we can also follow them in its clearness. As far as I am acquainted with the modern schools of Germany, they seem to be entirely ignorant of the value of colour as an assistant of feeling, and to think that hardness, dryness, and opacity are its virtues as employed in religious art; whereas I hesitate not to affirm that in such art, more than in any other, clearness, luminousness, and intensity of hue

are essential to right impression; and from the walls of the Arena chapel in their rainbow play of brilliant harmonies, to the solemn purple tones of Perugino's fresco in the Albizzi palace, I know not any great work of sacred art which is not as precious in colour as in all other qualities (unless indeed it be a Crucifixion of Fra Angelico in the Florence Academy, which has just been glazed and pumiced and painted and varnished by the picture cleaners until it glares from one end of the gallery to the other); only the pure white light and delicate hue of the idealists, whose colours are by preference such as we have seen to be the most beautiful in the chapter on Purity, are carefully to be distinguished from the golden light and deep pitched hue of the school of Titian, whose virtue is the grandeur of earthly solemnity, not the glory of heavenly rejoicing.

§ 16. Ideal form of the body itself, of what variety susceptible.

But leaving these accessary circumstances, and touching the treatment of the bodily form, it is evident in the first place that whatever typical beauty the human body is capable of possessing must be bestowed upon it when it is to be understood as spiritual. And therefore those general proportions and types which are deducible from comparison of the nobler individuals of the race, must be adopted and adhered to; admitting among them not, as in the human ideal, such varieties as result from past suffering, or contest with sin, but such only as are consistent with sinless nature, or are the signs of instantly or continually operative affections; for though it is conceivable that spirit should suffer, it is inconceivable that spiritual frame should retain like the stamped inelastic human clay, the brand of sorrow past, unless fallen:

> "His face,
> Deep scars of thunder had entrenched, and care
> Sat on his faded cheek."

Yet so far forth the Angelic idea is diminished, nor could this be suffered in pictorial representation.

§ 17. Anatomical development, how far admissible.

Again, such muscular development as is necessary to the perfect beauty of the body, is to be rendered. But that which is necessary to strength, or which appears to have been the result of laborious exercise, is inadmissible. No herculean form is Spiritual, for it is degrading the Spiritual creature to suppose

it operative through impulse of bone and sinew; its power is immaterial and constant, neither dependent on, nor developed by exertion. Generally it is well to conceal anatomical development as far as may be; even Michael Angelo's anatomy interferes with his divinity; in the hands of lower men the Angel becomes a preparation. How far it is possible to subdue or generalize the naked form I venture not to affirm, but I believe that it is best to conceal it as far as may be, not with light and undulating draperies that fall in with, and exhibit its principal lines, but with draperies, severe and linear such as were constantly employed before the time of Raffaelle. I recollect no single instance of a naked angel that does not look boylike or childlike, and unspiritualized; even Fra Bartolomeo's might with advantage be spared from the pictures at Lucca, and, in the hands of inferior men the sky is merely encumbered with sprawling infants; those of Domenichino in the Madonna del Rosario, and Martyrdom of St. Agnes, are peculiarly offensive, studies of bare-legged children howling and kicking in volumes of smoke. Confusion seems to exist in the minds of subsequent painters between Angels and Cupids.

§ 18. Symmetry, how valuable.

Farther, the qualities of symmetry and repose are of peculiar value in spiritual form. We find the former most earnestly sought by all the great painters in the arrangement of the hair, wherein no loosely flowing nor varied form is admitted, but all restrained in undisturbed and equal ringlets; often, as in the infant Christ of Fra Angelico, supported on the forehead in forms of sculpturesque severity. The angel of Masaccio, in the Deliverance of Peter, grand both in countenance and motion, loses much of his spirituality because the painter has put a little too much of his own character into the hair, and left it disordered.

§ 19. The influence of Greek art, how dangerous.

Of Repose, and its exalting power, I have already said enough for our present purpose, though I have not insisted on the peculiar manifestation of it in the Christian ideal as opposed to the Pagan. But this, as well as all other questions relating to the particular development of the Greek mind, is foreign to the immediate inquiry, which therefore I shall here conclude, in the hope of resuming it in detail after

examining the laws of beauty in the inanimate creation; always however holding this for certain, that of whatever kind or degree the short coming may be, it is not possible but that short coming should be visible in every Pagan conception, when set beside Christian; and believing, for my own part, that there is not only deficiency, but such difference in kind as must make all Greek conception full of danger to the student in proportion to his admiration of it; as I think has been fatally seen in its effect on the Italian schools, when its pernicious element first mingled with their solemn purity, and recently in its influence on the French historical painters; neither can I from my present knowledge fix upon an ancient statue which expresses by the countenance any one elevated character of soul, or any single enthusiastic self abandoning affection, much less any such majesty of feeling as might mark the features for supernatural. The Greek could not conceive a spirit; he could do nothing without limbs; his God is a finite God, talking, pursuing, and going journeys;[1] if at any time he was touched with a true feeling of the unseen powers around him, it was in the field of poised battle, for there is something in the near coming of the shadow of death, something in the devoted fulfilment of mortal duty, that reveals the real God, though darkly; that pause on the field of Platæa was not one of vain superstition; the two white figures that blazed along the Delphic plain, when the earthquake and the fire led the charge from Olympus, were more than sunbeams on the battle dust; the sacred cloud, with its lance light and triumph singing, that went down to brood over the masts of Salamis, was more than morning mist among the olives: and yet what were the Greek's thoughts of his God of Battle? No Spirit power was in the vision; it was a being of clay strength and human passion, foul, fierce, and changeful; of penetrable arms, and vulnerable flesh. Gather what we may of great from Pagan chisel or Pagan dream, and set it beside the orderer of Christian warfare, Michael the Archangel: not Milton's "with hostile

§ 20. Its scope, how limited.

[1] I know not anything in the range of art more unspiritual than the Apollo Belvedere: the raising of the fingers of the right hand in surprise at the truth of the arrow is altogether human, and would be vulgar in a prince, much more in a deity. The sandals destroy the divinity of the foot, and the lip is curled with mortal passion.

brow and visage all inflamed;" not even Milton's in kingly treading of the hills of Paradise; not Raffaelle's with the expanded wings and brandished spear, but Perugino's with his triple crest of traceless plume unshaken in heaven, his hand fallen on his crossletted sword, the truth girdle binding his undinted armour; God has put his power upon him, resistless radiance is on his limbs, no lines are there of earthly strength, no trace on the divine features of earthly anger; trustful and thoughtful, fearless, but full of love, incapable except of the repose of eternal conquest, vessel and instrument of omnipotence, filled like a cloud with the victor light, the dust of principalities and powers beneath his feet, the murmur of hell against him heard by his spiritual ear like the winding of a shell on the far off sea shore.

§ 21. Conclusion.

It is vain to attempt to pursue the comparison; the two orders of art have in them nothing common, and the field of sacred history, the intent and scope of Christian feeling, are too wide and exalted to admit of the juxtaposition of any other sphere or order of conception; they embrace all other fields like the dome of heaven. With what comparison shall we compare the types of the martyr saints, the St. Stephen of Fra Bartolomeo, with his calm forehead crowned by the stony diadem, or the St. Catherine of Raffaelle looking up to heaven in the dawn of the eternal day, with her lips parted in the resting from her pain? or with what the Madonnas of Francia and Pinturicchio, in whom the hues of the morning and the solemnity of eve, the gladness in accomplished promise, and sorrow of the sword-pierced heart, are gathered into one human Lamp of ineffable love? or with what the angel choirs of Angelico, with the flames on their white foreheads waving brighter as they move, and the sparkles streaming from their purple wings like the glitter of many suns upon a sounding sea, listening, in the pauses of alternate song, for the prolonging of the trumpet blast, and the answering of psaltery and cymbal, throughout the endless deep, and from all the star shores of heaven?

ADDENDA

Sect. I. Chap. I. § 7. The reader will probably recollect the two sonnets of Wordsworth which were published at the time when the bill for the railroad between Kendal and Bowness was laid before Parliament. His remonstrance was, of course, in vain; and I have since heard that there are proposals entertained for continuing this line to Whitehaven through *Borrowdale*. I transcribe the note prefixed by Wordsworth to the first Sonnet.

"The degree and kind of attachment which many of the yeomanry feel to their small inheritances can scarcely be overrated. Near the house of one of them stands a magnificent tree, which a neighbour of the owner advised him to fell for profit's sake. 'Fell it!' exclaimed the yeoman; 'I had rather fall on my knees and worship it.' It happens, I believe, that the intended railway would pass through this little property, and I hope that an apology for the answer will not be thought necessary by one who enters into the strength of the feeling."

The men who thus feel will always be few, and overborne by the thoughtless, avaricious crowd; but is it right, because they are a minority, that there should be no respect for them, no concession to them, that their voice should be utterly without regard in the council of the nation, and that any attempt to defend one single district from the offence and foulness of mercenary uses, on the ground of its beauty and power over men's hearts, should be met, as I doubt not it would be, by total and impenetrable scorn?

Sect. I. Chap. IV. § 6. Some confusion may arise in the mind of the reader on comparing this passage with others in the course of the volume, such as the second paragraph of the next chapter, in which the instinctive sense of beauty is asserted as existing in the child. But it is necessary always to observe the distinction made in the second chapter, between the instinctive or æsthetic, and the real or theoretic perception of Beauty; and farther it is to be held in mind that every elevated human instinct is in a measure put under voluntary power, and when highly cultivated, appears in increasing purity and intensity in each succeeding generation, or, on the other hand, diminishes until the race sinks into degradation nearly total, out of which no general laws may safely be deduced.

Sect. I. Chap. VII. § 6. It ought to have been noticed

respecting the Virgilian Conception of the Laocoon that no fault is to be found with the uniting of the poisonous and crushing powers in the serpents; this is, both in Virgil and Michael Angelo, a healthy operation of the imagination, since though these two powers are not united in any serpent that we know of, yet in the essence or idea of serpent they are; nor is there anything contradictory in them or incapable of perfect unity. But in Virgil it is unhealthy operation of the imagination, which destroys the verity both of the venom and the crushing, by attributing impossible concomitants to both: by supposing in the poison an impossible quantity uselessly applied, and leaving the victim capability of crying out, under the action of the coils.

Sect. II. Chap. III. § 33. It is painful to trace upon the walls of the Exhibitions lately opened in London, the universal evidence of the mode of study deprecated in this passage; and to observe the various kinds of wreck which are taking place in consequence with many of our most promising artists. In the British Institution I saw only three pictures in which there was evidence of desire and effort to render a loved passage of Nature faithfully. These were, first, a hayfield in a shower (I cannot at this moment refer to the painter's name) with a wooden bridge and single figure in the foreground, whose sky, in rainy, shattered, transparent grey I have seldom seen equalled, and whose distance and foreground were alike carefully studied, the one obscure with the dusty vapour rising out of the heat of the shower, the other rich in broad and luxuriant leafage; (the foaming water on the left was however too cold and false in its reflections). The second was a sky of Lauder's; evidently taken straight from Nature (which with the peculiar judgment frequent in hanging committees was placed at the top of the central room) but which was in great measure destroyed by the intrusion of a lay figure and a dramatic sea; the third a forest study by Linnell. Among the various failures, I am sorry to have to note the prominent one of Turner's; a strange example of the way in which the greatest men may at times lose themselves, from causes it is impossible to trace. Happily this picture cannot be construed into a sign of generally declining power, for I have seen three drawings executed at the same period in which the artist's mind appears in its full force. Nothing, however, could be more unfortunate than the central portion of the picture in the Institution, a heavy mass of hot colour being employed in the principal shade, and a strange meaningless green spread over the delicate hues of the distance, while the shadows on the right were executed with pure and crude blue, such as I believe cannot be shown in any other work whatsoever of the great painter. I am sorry also to have to warn so good a painter as Mr. Goodall of his being altogether

on a wrong road, the false chiaroscuro, exaggerated and impossible aërial perspective, and morbid prettiness and polish of complexions, in his large picture, are means of attracting vulgar notice which he certainly does not need, and which, if he continues to employ them, must end, and that speedily, in his sinking irrecoverably beneath the rank which it was the hope of all lovers of English art to see him attain and hold.

One more picture I must mention, as a refreshing and earnest study of truth, yet unexhibited, but which will appear in the Royal Academy; a seashore by Collins, where the sun just risen and struggling through gaps of threatening cloud is answered by the green dark transparent sea with a broad flake of expanding fire. I have never seen the oppression of sunlight in clear lurid rainy atmosphere more perfectly or faithfully rendered, and the various portions of reflected and scattered light are all studied with equal truth and solemn feeling.

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